

# **Where the West Begins? Geography, Identity and Promise**

**Papers of the Forty-Seventh Annual  
DAKOTA CONFERENCE  
A National Conference on the Northern Plains**



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**THE CENTER FOR WESTERN STUDIES**

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**Where the West Begins?  
Geography, Identity and Promise**

Papers of the Forty-Seventh Annual  
**Dakota Conference**

A National Conference on the Northern Plains

The Center for Western Studies  
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## PREFACE

“Great American Desert,” “Dakota Territory,” “Middle Border,” “Middle West,” “Midwest,” “Great Plains,” “High Plains,” “Western Plains,” “Northern Plains,” “Central Plains,” “Missouri River Basin,” “flyover country,” “the heartland,” “Siouxland,” “the big empty,” “the lost region.” These are some of the terms writers have used to identify the central region of the United States. For its 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting, April 24-25, 2015, the Dakota Conference took as its theme “Where the West Begins?” with the intention of exploring the geography, identity, and promise of the Dakotas and the prairie-plains areas of Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana.

Is the Northern Plains where the Midwest ends and the West begins? What geographical and demographic characteristics help us identify the northern region of the Great Plains? In what ways is the Northern Plains changing? Do these changes bode well or ill for the region and its traditional and new inhabitants? The “hollowing out” of small towns and rural areas in the plains has led to such responses as the buffalo commons, Pleistocene rewilding, and the American Prairie Reserve. Not all rural areas, however, are in decline—reservation populations are increasing. What issues confront Native American communities, and how will these communities respond to future challenges?

To focus our thoughts on the conference theme at the opening plenary session, I proposed that the Missouri River Basin, which extends as far east in the Northern Plains as the Big Sioux River, is the beginning of the West. I also asked CWS National Advisory Council member Jon K. Lauck, author of *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (2013), to assemble a panel on the Midwest and Great Plains, which drew considerable attention and will result in a symposium and possibly a book publication.

Among other invited speakers, Los Angeles-based author Josh Garrett-Davis, whose *Ghost Dances: Proving Up on the Great Plains* (2012) provides an insightful account of becoming an adult in Hot Springs and Pierre, South Dakota, in the 1980s and 1990s, spoke on the imaginative richness of the West. Executive Director of the Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce Ivan Sorbel addressed the economic challenges and promises of reservation life. The closing session featured Dr. Robert Wright, author of the new CWS publication *Little Business on the Prairie: Entrepreneurship, Prosperity and Challenge in South Dakota*, on the topic of “The Other Two Dakotas.”

Many sessions examined other aspects of the conference theme. David Trask, of Fort Collins, Colorado, asked whether Native American people have a place in the emerging Midwestern historical narrative. Thomas Simmons, USD Law School, examined the topographical emphases in the Hugh Glass narratives. William E. Lass, Minnesota State University Mankato, explained how the boundary between Minnesota and South Dakota was established. Twenty-four students presented this year, representing Minot State University, Valley City State University, Presentation College, and Augustana. Several presentations followed different paths, but all related to the region.

Seventeen authors participated in the Northern Plains Autograph Party. Dr. Gordon Iseminger, University of North Dakota, received the Distinguished Contribution

Award, presented by the CWS Board of Directors in recognition of his work as a teacher, author, and frequent presenter at the Dakota Conference.

Dedicated to examining contemporary issues in their historical and cultural contexts, the Dakota Conference is a signature event of the Center for Western Studies, whose programming focuses on the Northern Plains region of the American West. Get the latest conference news at [www.augie.edu/cws](http://www.augie.edu/cws) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Harry F. Thompson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
The Center for Western Studies

## **A Schism within the Nonpartisan League in South Dakota**

Grant K Anderson

“We’ll stick” became the motto of National Nonpartisan League followers. Arthur C Townley, a one- time Socialist and bankrupt farmer, launched the movement among North Dakota agriculturalists in 1915. The group objected to perceived abuses by railroads, bankers, and commodity brokers when dealing with farmers. Townley, a masterful organizer and motivator, rapidly gained a large following. This groundswell enabled the National Nonpartisan League to gain control of North Dakota’s state government by dominating the 1916 elections.

December 1916 found organizers of NPL crossing the border into South Dakota. Three months later the National Nonpartisan League claimed 20,000 South Dakota farmers had paid their \$16 membership fee, although this claim cannot be documented. Farmers in Brookings, Brown and Moody counties nearly all enrolled and Minnehaha County was portrayed as the “...best League organized county in South Dakota.”

But the agrarian insurgents failed to dominate the political landscape of South Dakota as they had to the north. Peter Norbeck, a critic of the NPL, was re-elected South Dakota Governor by a substantial majority in 1918. Mark P Bates, the NPL endorsed candidate finished second with Democratic challenger James E Bird a distant third. The eruption of rural discontent in South Dakota was far below that of its northern twin.

Organizers demanded complete loyalty from National Nonpartisan League enrollees. Only through a solid organization could they hope to realize their objectives including

state ownership of stock yards, terminal elevators and warehouses as well as government regulation of grain trading among others. Arthur C Townley assumed the status of an almost dictator. Together with Fred Wood and William Lembke, the trio formed a self-appointed executive committee with Townley having the final say in all matters. Dues collected, less organizer's commission, were forwarded to the committee, which doled out funds to individual states as they saw fit. "Any member of the League, entitled to the information, can find out what is being done with the money," assured Townley.

Financial questions and the undemocratic nature of the NPL fermented unrest. To address these concerns the first national convention of the Nonpartisan League convened 2 December 1918 in St Paul, Minnesota. Forty-one delegates, representing the thirteen states in which the NPL was organized, met in secret sessions with journalists receiving a daily briefing of proceedings.

Allegations of fiscal impropriety spawned an audit committee and retention of an independent accounting agency to peruse league records. They concluded the "total amount of money drawn for salary and expenses was less than half the allowance provided by the Executive Committee to President Townley."<sup>5</sup> No cases of misrepresentation or squandered league funds by Townley were found according to the financial report presented.

The delegates increased his annual salary from \$3500 to \$5000 and awarded him a second presidential term. Townley refused it until a referendum of all league members gave their approval. A ballot would appear in the *Nonpartisan Leader*, the national weekly official publication of the NPL. It was to be marked yes or no as to a second term

for Townley and mailed into national headquarters in St Paul to be tabulated by a five member committee.

“If Mr. Townley were more of a democrat and less of an autocrat he would have submitted his candidacy rather than his election for approval,” editorialized the Watertown Public Opinion. The Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, a bitter opponent of the NPL since its incursion into South Dakota, portrayed the referendum as a fake and a farce. Editor Charles M Day pointed out to readers that the referendum provided no option for another candidate, named no time when the election closed, tabulation would be in the hands of Townley supporters, and the voter must sign his ballot. “The stage is being set for a real revolt against Townley control; there is not the slightest doubt that it will make great headway,” predicted the Republican editor.<sup>8</sup>

Less than a fortnight after the national convention a call went out for a South Dakota meeting of NPL members to be held in Sioux Falls 19 December 1918. A “...free discussion of what is better for the future,” was promised by organizers. “...Members of the executive committee will be required to be present and...tell us what was actually done in St Paul,” assured the announcement. Twenty-six men from five southeastern counties signed the call, including three Republican state legislators and the Democratic state chairman.<sup>10</sup> Three signed the call for an organization to which they did not belong. Sympathetic opinion molders reported handbills were circulated around South Dakota and “newspapers carried the announcement prominently.” Columns claimed “...thousands were clamoring for a change in the League management...” of South Dakota.

Three or four individuals supposedly crisscrossed the state hoping to build support for the gathering to be held in the Sioux Falls auditorium.

We "...understand that some interesting proceedings can be anticipated," predicted the Sioux Falls Press. The nearby Daily Argus Leader found "a number of protestors to the league methods are 'cussing and discussing Townley.'" Rumors suggested they may attempt to divorce the state organization from outside control.

At the appointed date and time only a handful of farmers were in the auditorium. A mere five of those who signed the call for the meeting were in attendance. The state NPL headquarters in Mitchell had not authorized this meeting and had supposedly and unknowingly, called a gathering of Minnehaha County NPL members for the same day in the Sioux Falls Labor Hall. By shrewd propaganda nearly all farmers who ventured to Sioux Falls to attend the upstart meeting ended up at the rival meeting of the Townley people.

The maverick meeting group had invited representatives of the national headquarters to attend. Walter Thomas Mills, a renowned Socialist author and lecturer, and Albert E Bowen, a highly trusted and faithful Townley lieutenant came to Sioux Falls and caucused with Labor Hall group. Their mission was to "...gum up the machinery of revolution," opined a local editor who referred to the pair as "thumb riggers." Another portrayed Albert E Bowen as "...the man chosen by Townley to swing the big club over the heads of the leaguers," in South Dakota.

The factions agreed to merge the meetings and allow both sides to be heard. Estimates put attendance between 60 and 100 farmers at the blended meeting. Although

the unauthorized group advertised theirs would be an open meeting, reporters were not allowed in the compromise meeting. Albert E Bowen delivered a financial report and he and Mills commented on the recent national convention and the new organizational model for the NPL.

Henry W Smith (Sioux Falls), Henry Solem (Baltic) and John E Kelley (Colman) spearheaded the home rule faction. Over the past 25 years they all had labored for agrarian reform. In addition John E Kelley served as state legislator, US Representative, and delegate to the 1912 Democratic national nominating convention.

He managed to obtain the floor and insisted South Dakotans had the right to manage their own affairs. Kelley maintained state residents should be empowered to manage their own finances and elect a state manager and other officers of their Nonpartisan League. They endorsed the "...original principles announced by the League, minus the extremely socialistic additions forced to the front by Townley." It should be an organization built from the bottom up rather than the present Townley model from the top down in his opinion.

Robert E Dowell (Artisan) requested a resolution committee be formed to make a presentation to the group. The three man committee endorsed amending the articles of the national organization to permit state members to do as Mr. Kelley had proposed. A substitute resolution was introduced calling for a sweeping vote of confidence in the national league hierarchy and ratification of the audit report of league finances. In the interest of fairness, separate ballots were cast on each motion.

The Kelley home rule proposal was soundly defeated when it garnered only four favorable votes. It was obvious the “Townley steam roller put them out of business in true machine politics style,” summarized a supporter. The Kelleyites were out-generated and the league will continue to be run from the outside,” lamented the Huron Huronite.

Events of December 19 ignited a heated war of words with each side propagandizing their philosophy. Printers ink was the main weapon of choice with newspaper columns the chief battleground. Mark Scott’s Sioux Falls Daily Farm Journal and Market Reporter became the insurgents’ main publicist. The Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, Mitchell Gazette, Sioux Falls Press and a number of southeastern South Dakota weeklies also helped champion the home rule cause. The South Dakota Leader, published in Mitchell, was official publication of the Nonpartisan League in the state. The kept press, among them the Mitchell Republican and Marion Record, plus a number of weeklies owned or controlled by Townley supporters formed the opposition.

A Leader article pointed out the home rule meeting was called in “...the corner of the state where no general attendance could have been expected” as it was home to the main conspirators. Editor R I Evans saw a “...little bunch of...disappointed and discharged League employees in Minnehaha and Moody counties...determined to serve the Norbeck gang and anti- farmer forces” as the instigators. They were “...trying to salve their own sore spots” by stirring up internal dissention of league membership in his mind. These “...self- appointed dictators at Sioux Falls” sought to capture the regular league organization “...make it the tail to the Democratic kite,” an obvious reference to John E Kelley and his political affiliation and rumored quest for a senator seat.

Home rule proponents were undaunted by the December meeting's outcome. Reports had them speaking at meetings of league members across the state, issuing press releases , and organizing a sequel to be held 17 January 1919 at the Journal newspaper office in Sioux Falls.

No printed call for the conclave graced media pages as they had in December. Sponsors portrayed 90% of the farmers in eastern and central South Dakota longed for home rule.

Henry W Smith, West Sioux Falls, gaveled the assemblage to order. It would be far from harmonious. Delegates from five counties came to order. No official minutes exist but a pro Townley editor estimated about 20 people were present with approximately half favoring status quo for the organization. L J White and H P Lee, former recruiters for the Townley league enlightened the audience on efforts to revise the National Nonpartisan League in South Dakota. Chairman Smith declared disruption of the league was not their intention; rather local control of the state affairs was their goal.

Abraham Lincoln Putnam, Timber Lake, spoke concerning A C Townley's fiscal matters. South Dakota league members paid one third of a million to the national office in the 18 months since the organization entered the state, however postdated checks accounted for nearly half the amount which may prove to be worthless paper Putnam conceded. The gist of his presentation was that the South Dakota branch of the National Nonpartisan League had an actual "ledger balance" of \$15,000 cash.

A five member executive board was named headed by John E Kelley. They would select a state manager of the embryo South Dakota Nonpartisan League and be in charge

of general matters. A semi-annual financial statement would go to all members and anytime 30 members so petitioned, any proposed law or constitutional change would have to be submitted for member approval. The Sioux Falls Journal and Market Reporter, was designated official publication of the South Dakota Nonpartisan League.

Membership was open to women and Scott's stenographer, Mrs. L. J. White was named Secretary/Treasurer and charged' affairs of state headquarters in Sioux Falls. Her husband informed listeners that members were already being signed up in the new organization with their \$16 membership fee deposited in a bank until the full membership voted how to spend it. "South Dakota farmers no longer want to be 'hornswoggled' by Townley's agitators" according to a booster.

Contemporary media placed their own spin on the event when it became public knowledge. An editorial in the Iroquois Chief thundered the new organization "...will doubtless appeal to the members who are getting fed up of throwing their money in a rat hole." It concurred with others that "...so far as South Dakota is concerned the Nonpartisan League is a house divided against itself."

New rump, fake, and vest pocket edition were among adjectives the South Dakota Leader used to describe the fledgling group.. The Townley mouthpiece portrayed the Home Rule league as revolters and an insurgent movement to be avoided by subscribers. Each weekly issue from February through April 1919, hammered at readers to stick with their national organization.

The home rule conspirators knew they must attract a large number of converts if they were to prevail. Every South Dakota member of the Townley league was circulated with

propaganda and a membership form. Results were less than anticipated and a second mass mailing, using a mailing list supposedly stolen from the Townley group, went out in late February 1919. Thus the Kelleyites were the receivers of stolen goods that were employed to mail deceptive information. This was fraud and an attempt to obtain money under false pretenses in the eyes of the South Dakota Leader and other Townley disciples.

John E Kelley resigned as Democratic chairman to devote full time to organizing the South Dakota Nonpartisan League. He had joined the NPL in August 1917. When he was introduced to A C Townley in mid-1918 in Fargo he found him a person with great ability as an organizer and coordinator. Kelley had asked, "... if you are permitted to organize South Dakota, how long do you intend to continue one man power?" Townley replied if you "... will leave me alone until I get South Dakota organized I will turn the state over to you to manage as you see fit." Kelley said he would "...give you a free hand in South Dakota until the state shall be organized. But when that is done I want South Dakota to manage its own affairs in every way".

The South Dakotan, Kelley, later released a pointed open letter explaining his reasons for no longer following Townley's leadership. He claimed to have spent over 30 years laboring to improve the farmers' lot. Kelley maintained several of the national league's goals could be traced back to his economic theories and Townley organizers carried his literature with them when signing up members. By way of background, the South Dakotan described a Sioux Falls meeting the previous spring of over 30 prominent farmers to plan campaign strategy for the `1918 elections. What was needed was a daily newspaper with a statewide circulation to spread their message. A strategy was

developed to purchase the Sioux Falls Press with member subscriptions. The scheme, however, was rejected by Townley. "The treachery of Townley in this act alone...brand him as a traitor and shows all he cares for farmers is to control them and handle the cash that flows in a steady stream into his coffers," roared Kelley.

In a follow up open letter to George Alt, of Faith, that found its way into the Sioux Falls Press, Kelley continued to taut his talents. He informed the addressee he had been a farm lobbyist in Washington each of the last six years because of his "...technical knowledge on economic subjects." Congressman George Young (Rep-ND) and Charles Dillon (Rep-SD) read several Kelley articles into the Congressional Record and widely distributed copies to their constituents. Kelley concluded he had been elected President of the South Dakota Nonpartisan League but resigned as he wanted no position. Rather, "...I shall take an active part as a writer and investigator of economic subjects," Alt was assured. Kelley closed by taking A C Townley to task for claims he assisted in the election of Governor Peter Norbeck the previous fall.

The South Dakota Leader fired back at Kelley if the South Dakota NPL was successful in dividing South Dakota farmers, misrule and gang politics would persist. "The only thing they lack is having Norbeck president of the league," in the mind of C G Hill, Isabel, South Dakota in his letter to Editor R I Evans. From Hartford came another letter reporting a Wall Lake rally, sponsored by home rulers from Flandreau, failed miserably.

Townley's publicist in Mitchell ran columns headed "Kelley Acts Like Jealous Old man," "Fourteen Lies Nailed," and "Fake League Attempts to Get Members By Representing Itself As A Branch of the National Body" to discredit the home rule movement.

Subscribers were told the insurgents relied on misrepresentations and falsehoods to attack the NPL. An Elk Point farmer warned insider attacks were being made to ferment internal dissention. "...I am afraid if we tear loose from the parent tree we will still fade away as other reform leagues have done," penned a Wessington Springs farmer.

Late February had the Argus Leader announcing President A C Townley was about to visit. Purportedly turmoil among South Dakota leaguers attracted his attention and he meant to unleash a blitzkrieg to stop the defection of farmers that was creating havoc with his financial balance sheet.

Those gathered 4 March 1919 in the Sioux Falls auditorium were stunned that no mention was made of the schism. William T Mills, the principal speaker, enlightened his audience on the league program enacted in North Dakota. Townley spoke briefly but did not seem agitated by the home rulers as the local media would have readers believe.

Nonetheless, John E Kelley pleaded with farmers to sign up with the home rule movement as "...it will fight your battles and not let the Townley bunch get another swipe at your pockets for another \$300,000."

He was alluding to his accusation the Townley NPL "... took over \$300,000 from the state, over solicitors fees" and only obtained the election of 17 legislators. This meant state farmers have "...less members adhering to our views and less influence in every way in the state than before the advent of Townleyism." The amount \$300,000 could not have been expended in the 1918 election, Kelley maintained, because of a widespread flu outbreak and subsequent quarantines, no campaign could be made in the fall of 1918.

Frank J Sullivan, Robinson, North Dakota, wrote Kelley to inform him "...discontent is honeycombed through the league in North Dakota." Sullivan reported a reconstruction fight had been active for four months and outright a state movement had been launched. He wished to learn Kelley's position and proposed cooperation between the two states. Mrs. B T White, Secretary/Treasurer of the South Dakota NPL, received a communique from Herbert F Sweet, Turtle Lake, North Dakota, declaring Kidder County in open revolt against the Townley league. The secretary of the Kidder County NPL, Sweet suggested mutual help "...in fighting this gasping avaricious monster", Townley.<sup>38</sup> Sweet also contacted Kelley noting he strove for selection of executive officers by a direct member vote and proposed an alliance. No evidence was discovered suggesting cooperation between the South Dakota and North Dakota home rule groups. However, the olive branch to South Dakotans suggests the home rule movement was not a local phenomenon.

A South Dakota Leader article entitled "Townley Exonerated," drew Kelley's ire. He maintained the NPL czar purchased a string of North Dakota stores, some banks, and several newspapers with misappropriated farmer dollars and still held promissory notes, checks and credits. These were held by conspirators who could use them for any purpose they deemed in the interest of farmers.

Readers of the South Dakota Leader's 17 April issue learned "...the bottom has dropped out of the South Dakota Home Rule. It is now a reminiscence." The article noted the Sioux Falls Daily Journal and Market Reporter ceased operation 9 April. A tentative sale to the Kelley faction for \$70,000 failed to materialize. Unable to garner

sufficient subscribers, Editor Mark Scott declared bankruptcy and exited Sioux Falls after telling employees to immediately suspend publication.

The South Dakota Nonpartisan League Board of Directors, whose names appeared at the head of the paper's editorial column, sought a restraining order against Editor Scott to continue publication until they could consult with him. The circuit court declined and the home rule publication passed from existence. In its stead the directors hoped to produce a weekly paper to satisfy their obligation to dues paying members, but it did not happen.

A subsequent column conceded Kelley had talent and "...has done some service for the cause of farmers in years gone by." He would continue his criticism of Townley and maintain "...his headquarters in the Sioux Falls Press office and his hindquarters in the office of the Argus Leader," while trying to revive his withering organization editorialized R I Evans.

As home rule languished in its death throes, John E Kelley published two articles critical of Townley and his movement. The first made no mention of the home rulers. In a follow up article in the 12 June, 1919 Moody County Enterprise Kelley went on the offensive after several weeks of silence. He maintained the national league did "...not dare to come out and name one single statement ever made," by him as being untruthful." He denied involvement with the establishment of the Sioux Falls Journal and Market Reporter as well as any wrongdoing with unfulfilled subscriptions. Kelley admitted writing articles for the bygone paper but denied profiting from his work.

The South Dakota Nonpartisan League met the same fate as splinter groups in North Dakota, Minnesota, and other states. They failed because they did not reflect . . . “the wishes of the greater membership of the NPL,” reasoned the North Dakota Leader published in Fargo. These home rule proponents failed to entice members to repudiate their national organization. Members saw no reason to break it up when it provided what home rulers demanded. The NPL’s first national delegate convention established a framework of “...an absolutely democratic basis built from the precinct up to the top by absolute democratic representation.” Farmers felt a national organization would have a better chance of securing their goals than thirteen individual state organizations. The National Nonpartisan League made strides toward their demands quicker than any agrarian movement in history and thus members were satisfied with their present arrangement.

Home rulers offered little change beyond the ouster of Arthur C Townley as league president. This was unlikely as the Kelleyites were unable to prove their allegations that Townley was taking or misusing league funds for personal gain.

Results of the membership’s national referendum on another presidential term for A C Townley were made public in February 1919. They showed the incumbent with a 99% approval rate. South Dakota supposedly had in excess of 25,000 league members but less than half that number voted in the referendum. Of these a mere 2.4% (264) ballots were marked negative. This data, possibly tainted by the manner in which it was obtained, nonetheless refuted home rulers claims that 90—98% of South Dakota members were disenchanted with Townley’s leadership and demanded a change.

The Townley league constantly kept the home rule issue before its members— something the Kelleyites were unable to match. League dues provided a media outlet to espouse its cause. The weekly South Dakota Leader consumed ink and paper in monstrous gulps to downplay the South Dakota Nonpartisan League. Press releases, letters to the editor from satisfied members, and editorials slanted toward a specific readership, regularly appeared in every member's home.

The Sioux Falls Journal and Market Reporter had tried to counterattack the Leader's propaganda. Its abrupt suspension left the home rule group without its publicity source and moral builder. The Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, Sioux Falls Press, Mitchell Gazette and assorted Republican leaning county weeklies were left as champions of the home rule movement. They supported Governor Peter Norbeck and his anti NPL position. However, far fewer column inches were devoted to the support of the embryo league than were directed against Arthur C Townley and his organization.

The Townley group profited from confusion that abounded. Was the proposed new league a branch of the established league or a total new entity? Solicitors for both groups were in the field recruiting members. Reports claimed 95% of existing members renewed for another two years and the number of new members rose dramatically.

Lack of a solid media to champion their cause, a scant membership and a dwindling treasury caused the South Dakota Nonpartisan League to fade into oblivion. Given the opportunity to reject Arthur C Townley and his organization nearly all South Dakota league members declared "We'll Stick."

## FOOTNOTES

1. Morlan, Robert L, Political Prairie Fire, 3.
2. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 21 December 1918, 1.
3. Schell, Herbert S, History of South Dakota, 4th Edition, 268. A bitter fight existed between Democratic and Nonpartisan organizations regarding claims that James E Bird was working to get Norbeck elected. Sioux Falls Press, 3 November 1918, 1.
4. The Nonpartisan Leader, 16 December 1918, 3.
5. 5. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 14 December 1918, 2. See also Saloutous, Theodore and John D. Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West 1900-1939, 170.
6. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 21 December 1918, 1. Mark P Bates, NPL candidate for South Dakota
7. Governor in 1918, was a member of the committee.
8. Watertown Public Opinion, 28 December, 1918, 2.
9. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader 3 January 1919, 4.
10. Sioux Falls Press, 20 December 1918, 3.
11. Turner County provided 5 signers, Minnehaha County 7, and Moody County 5. Lake County had 3 signers and McCook County 2. The three state legislators were all Republicans---L E Stoddard, Turner County, State Representative; Eric H Odland, Turner County, State Senator, and Carl G Kjaldseth, Yankton County, State Senator. South Dakota Legislative Research Council, Biographical Directory of the South Dakota Legislature, 1889-1989.
12. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell) 28 December 1918, 1.
13. Sioux Falls Press, 12 December 1918, 1.
14. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 19 December 1918, 10.
15. Sioux Falls Press, 22 December 1918, 4.
16. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 23 December 1918, 4.
17. Moody County Enterprise, 12 December 1918, 4; 26 December 1918, 4.
18. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 19 June 1919, 3.
19. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 24 December 1918, 4.
20. Huron Huronite, 23 December 1918, 4.
21. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 4 January 1919, 2.
22. IBID., 25 January 1919, 4.
23. IBID.
24. The Mitchell Morning Republican, 21 December 1918, 2.
25. Webster Reporter and Farmer, 23 January, 1919, 1.
26. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 12 February, 1919, 2.
27. Iroquois Chief, reprinted in the Webster Reporter and Farmer, 13 February 1919,2.
28. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell) 31 May 1919, 2.
29. Moody County Enterprise, 13 February 1919, 1.
30. IBID.

31. IBID.
32. Sioux Falls Press, 22 March, 1919, 3.
33. IBID.
34. Sioux Dakota Leader (Mitchell) 15 March 1919, 4.
35. IBID, 8 February 1919, 2.
36. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 6 March 1919, 4.
37. "Townley Dodges Questions," John E Kelley in Sioux Falls Press, 17 April 1919, 3.
38. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 18 January 1919, 3.
39. IBID, 1 February 1919, 4. A unanimous vote at three separate meetings rejected Sullivan's league.
  - a. League. North Dakota Leader 16 November 1918, 1.
40. "Townley-Lembke Stores Exposed," by John E Kelley, Moody County Enterprise, 4 April 1919,4.
41. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 19 April 1919, 3.
42. Salem Special, 17 April 1919. 8: Sioux Falls Press, 8 April 1919, 5.
43. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 19 April 1919, 4.
44. IBID., 31 May 1919, 2.
45. Moody County Enterprise, 12 June 1919, 1.
46. North Dakota Leader, 1 February 1919, 2. A Nonpartisan League of Minnesota was formed shortly after the NPL entered the state. The short lived group was organized by five men representing wealthy lumbermen and Minneapolis merchants.
47. South Dakota Leader (Mitchell), 28 December, 1919, 3.
48. The Nonpartisan Leader, 10 February 1919, . South Dakota cast the most no votes with 264. This represented 27% of all no votes cast by the 13 states participating.

## **Violence and Discrimination in Indian Country: A Reality for Native American Women**

Karlie Bakke

Thesis: This paper will argue that violence and discrimination in Indian Country started as a historical tragedy, but remains a prevalent issue for Native American women, which requires much more attention than it's previously received, as well as a change of mindset for contemporary communities.

It is important to distinguish the sociological differences between sex and gender when discussing gender inequality. Sex is the biological differences between men and women, while gender is the cultural meaning attached to masculine and feminine roles. Gender influences how societies determine and manage sex roles (Gould, 1977, pg. 186). Euro-American conquest of Indian peoples altered traditional gender roles for groups like the Lakota. Overtime, Euro-American men came to understand their role in society as masculine and superior. European, and then American, males assumed females were inferior. This resulted in long-term violence against Native American women; the discrimination and inequality that dominant culture thought "natural" found its way into Indian culture. The sad reality of injustice for women has prevailed on reservations for many years. Examples of abuse and cruelty are ubiquitous throughout Native American writings, statistics, and books. In examining past literature and research we can find

reoccurring themes that can help us better understand the actions that need to be taken for the future.

Although abuse still runs rampant, Native American women are achieving recent success in politics. Women have played an extensive role in tribal history, and it is important to not overlook their actions. This paper will examine the discrimination and abuse Native American women experience, and not just from dominant culture. By looking at general trends and the Pine Ridge Reservation specifically, a new understanding of the startling statistics that have appeared can be understood; it will prove that Native American women's abuse is a much greater concern than society has recognized.

Domestic violence is a contemporary issue on reservations that has ties in history and tradition. A source that highlights the history of abuse is the book *Conquest* by Andrea Smith. This author shows how corrupt the boarding school system was for Native American youth. It forced assimilation in such a way that subjected youth to rampant abuse, including a high incidence of sexual abuse. Starting in the 1880s, the state-sanctioned boarding schools made young women feel as though they had no worth and were not even human. Smith (2005) claims that the boarding school system is the main reason for gendered violence, because it displaced traditions that provided women with positions of leadership with Western patriarchal norms. The violence of the boarding school system undermined female power and introduced sexual violence to Native American women.

Another way in which the boarding schools proved to corrupt the minds of native youth can be examined from a psychological standpoint. Bloom (2005) argues that the separation from the mother causes a missing ambivalence, which in turn psychologically embeds the notion of dominance into the native boys' young minds. The way in which young boys and girls repress the ambivalence explains a lot about Native American gender oppression. Boys and girls handled stress from the boarding schools in different ways, which led to abusive traits in later life. The repression of ambivalence for boys carries into manhood as a drive to control and dominate, while the repression of ambivalence for girls carries into adulthood as giving into dominance. Women psychologically don't have the drive or the energy to resist control. These competing psychological reactions help elucidate why domestic violence might be so prevalent on reservations.

There are multiple reasons as to why Native American women's abuse is typically overshadowed, but the most prevalent reason throughout research is that abuse is greatly under reported to the tribal and federal governments (Medicine, 1988). Because tribal governments on reservations, specifically in South Dakota, are extremely limited and underfunded, tribal police departments cannot keep up with the crime. In addition, dominant culture indifference, when coupled with competing law codes, meant that off-reservation perpetrators of violence often go unpunished. The result is widespread domestic violence. Sadly enough, domestic violence has become so common on South Dakota reservations over the past couple decades that it has become a social norm and victims never report to authorities. The *Rapid City Journal* (2010) reported that sexual

assault is the most unreported crime on the Pine Ridge reservation. There is a present stigma on Pine Ridge of public acceptance of crime. Complicating the issue is the role of alcohol. Drunkenness is typically used as an excuse for domestic violence. Young women learn early that domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking will most likely occur to them sometime in their lives. According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, 34% of American Indian and Alaskan Native women have either been raped, or the victim of an attempted rape. This compares with 18% of white women, 19% of African American women and 7% of Asian and Pacific Islander women that completed the survey. In South Dakota, Native women make up 40% of all sexual assault cases in the state.

The *Rapid City Journal* (2010) suggested that location also played a role in domestic violence cases. The reason the tribal government does not take immediate action in such crimes is because of the reservation's location. Pine Ridge is located on about three million rural acres; the vast distances hinder the delivery of subpoenas, and the undermanned tribal police force finds itself torn between delivering subpoenas and preventing it from happening. Investigating cases of abuse and violence are also a rare occurrence because that involves money that the tribal government does not have.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2009) also reported that many cases of domestic violence or sexual assault go unreported on all United States reservations because of factors resulting in intimidation. Native women who are raped or assaulted typically also experience stalking or harassing after the attack, therefore are scared to report it to authorities. Reporting these cases could potentially upset the *tiyospaye*. Native women would rather suffer the psychological implications of sexual assault than disrupt the bond

of the tiyospaye. This is a powerful idea because it shows how important kin is to Native people. Also, reporting could mean confessing to incest, which is a fear of Siouan culture (Deloria, 1988). This creates a vicious cycle. In order to suppress their feelings of depression and fear, women typically find consolidation in alcohol or other substances. The Bureau report (2009) noted that Native women who experience abuse or assault would most likely have higher suicide rates and more mental distress than the general population, as well as be more likely to die of a poverty related-illness. In today's dominant society, violence against Native American women started as deliberate, racist attempts by Americans to destroy Indian traditional culture.

The tiyospaye and the focus on new relationships between men and women were particularly traditional and meaningful to the Lakota. The gentleness women and children originally had under the tiyospaye, which is shown in Ella Deloria's *Waterlily*, disappeared. New rules and societal norms replaced this love.

This transformation is represented in Mary Crow Dog's autobiography *Lakota Woman*. According to Crow Dog (1990) many Indian women put up with alcoholism and violence in their spouses because they fear the consequences of standing up to them, or leaving the relationship. In her autobiography she focuses on the issue of rape of young Indian women by racist white policemen. This is a powerful concept in Mary Crow Dog's book because her relationship with Leonard was unfair. She continually tells Leonard 'no' until she feels absolutely stuck and the relationship is forced upon her. Leonard acts superior to Mary, partly because Siouan society is this way. Siouan society socially constructs the way in which Mary and Leonard's relationship is. Mary is not allowed to

talk to men and is treated as an intruder. Traditional society allowed conversation via kinship ties, but not now.

Another example of this is the way in which they refer to one another. Mary calls Leonard her uncle and he calls her his niece because of the age difference between them. Through these interactions Mary and Leonard create the way in which their relationship will be- one sided. A theme that arises throughout the autobiography is Mary's inner conflict with traditionalism and assimilation. Mary is a mixed-blood, which means she lacks traditionalist traits. One of the reasons Mary is attracted to Leonard Crow Dog is because he is a full blood, therefore is a very traditional Lakota man.

Mary explains that the victims are mostly full-blood girls, too shy and afraid to complain (Roberta Hendrickson, 1996). She goes on to say that police falsely arrest these girls and rape them in jail or take them out in rural fields to assault them, and leave them to find their way home. As if this news is not horrifying enough, Crow Dog emphasizes how the government in South Dakota, because of the power difference between dominant and minority ethnic groups, seldom takes these girls seriously. *Lakota Woman*, however; sheds a little light on the topic. Young women are slowly starting to speak out about rape and are refusing to put up with their husbands' alcoholism and violence.

There is no excuse for domestic violence. Still, Native American men articulate that they batter because their culture makes violence an acceptable, masculine way to express or to deal with feelings of anger, fear, depression, and hopelessness (Roberta Hendrickson, 1996). While this may be a legacy of poverty in general, it greatly applies to Indian culture. Men in South Dakota Indian Country have accepted the values of the

dominant culture and therefore act violently toward women and children. In discussing the high-rate of violence on South Dakota's Indian reservations, Hendrickson (1996) urges Native Americans to remember their past. Historically, Indian women were protected from violence in relationships with men, and children were raised with gentleness and respect, not violence. Hart (2008) continues this idea by mentioning that women were traditionally seen as life givers and life sustainers. In the past, they were respected and were considered extremely sacred to a tribe. Now, because women are abused in contemporary society, cultural values of the past have not survived. Reinforcing these traditional tribal values may combat domestic violence (Shoemaker, 1995). In order to escape this trap of domestic violence and sexual assault it is important that Native American communities unlearn this culture of violence.

American conquest of the Sioux led to a new notion, that women are "dirtier" and less valuable than their male counterparts. This low self-esteem plays out in many ways, including a self-hatred of their bodies (Hart, 2008). These ideas have led Native American women who survive domestic violence and sexual assault to have the belief that they no longer wish to be Indian. Coming to loathe one's own culture and history has become a common thing among Native Americans. Racial differences are still prevalent in today's society because present-day racism proves to be the center of much of Indian Country's violence and abuse. It is impossible to deal with violence and abuse without also dealing with this conflict of racism.

In attempt to contain this racism, the federal government has worked to pass the Violence against Women Act that would provide money toward investigation and

prosecution of violent crimes against women as well as impose automatic and mandatory restitution on those convicted (Hart, 2008). The Act was first passed in 1994 by Bill Clinton, but was greatly restored in 2013 with the help of Joe Biden. The changes that took place in 2013 were arguably the first steps taken to strengthen protection for Native American victims of domestic violence and rape. With these revisions, Indian tribes could now prosecute non-Native men for abuse against Native American women. This news was huge in Native American history and political success because prior to these changes tribes were prohibited from exercising criminal jurisdiction over outside perpetrators. This change is important because 75% of all domestic violence assaults against native women come from non-Indian men (Hart, 2008). The fact that abusers are often non-Indian creates a jurisdictional gap in the ability of law enforcement to effectively respond to domestic violence. This gap also attracts many non-Indian habitual sexual predators to tribal areas (Huyser, Sakamoto, & Takei, 2006). The majority of rapes that occur are occurring on tribal reservations, and fluctuate with frequency. Huyser et al. (2006) note that accounts of violence against Native women increase during hunting season in the Midwest because Non-Native American perpetrators take advantage of the immunity.

Smith (2005) shows how both colonizing cultures and mainstream social justice movements rely on historical and cultural narratives that require Native people to “play dead.” In modern society, this idea of absence is still immensely popular. The major example Smith gives of how mainstream activism expects Native women in particular to “play dead” is the failure of both indigenous activists and advocates against domestic violence to center Native women in their work. In order to fix this mess, Smith calls on

activists in both communities to adopt new approaches to combating racism and gender violence together. *Conquest* proves itself contemporarily different and interesting because Smith (2005) argues that relying on state and police intervention does not prevent the dilemma, it may in fact make it worse. Smith's solution is to create modern communities that understand domestic violence is neither acceptable nor explainable. Communities, not government, must end the cycle of violence. In this sense, Smith is proposing a return of the importance of familial relationship's and kinship obligations.

In recent years, new forms of resources have become available to assist in returning to tradition. With the rise of technology and social media, outreach programs and support systems are more popular than ever before for Native Americans. For example, the Native Women's Society of the Great Plains is a coalition that works to connect communities across the Plains in attempt to reclaim the sacred status of women. The Society evolved from the need for the small individual programs to have support, share promising practices and frustrations, network, and collaborate to strengthen strategies and responses to violence in their respective tribal communities (NWSGP, 2014).

In looking at Pine Ridge, the poorest and most poverty-stricken reservation, it is evident that these new resources are not enough. There is only one behavioral health office for all of Pine Ridge. For a reservation of Pine Ridge's size, one office is not sufficient by any means. Also, behavioral health probably is not the most appropriate service that could be offered. Pine Ridge would benefit from a domestic violence center or programs such as Youth and Family Services. In order to create a community in which

people will intervene in abusive situations, better education of the topic should be instilled in children at a young age. Instead of girls being taught that they will be abused, they should be taught self-worth. Children should also be taught how to notice signs of abuse, and how to report it.

In order to end the terror of domestic violence in Native American communities, individuals must remember their cultural roots. This means that women must be central again. In order to support survivors, communities also must recognize that men and women are biologically programmed to think differently, and this needs to be respected. According to the gender difference model of feminist theories men think with the ethic of justice, while women think with the ethic of care (Foster, 1999). Men think in terms of justification, masculinity, and don't care about feelings. Women are more rational, acknowledge feelings and values, and are overall more emotional. Therefore, in order to support survivors of abuse it is crucial to address the ethic of care and approach women in a sensitive manner. The mindset of tribes needs to be one where the well-being and safety of women and youth are seen as central to the health of the community. Thoughts and actions must be communal rather than individualistic. Although this sounds ideal, Smith recognizes that it is much easier said than done. In order for this to happen in today's society it would require a radical shift in tribal communities everywhere, and realistically it is not possible. Smith is respected as an author for acknowledging the obstacle of putting her proposal into practice effectively:

Sometimes it is easy to underestimate the amount of intervention that is required before a perpetrator can really change his behavior. Often a perpetrator will subject her/him to community accountability measures but eventually will tire of them. If community members are not vigilant

about holding the perpetrator accountable for years and instead assume he or she is 'cured,' the perpetrator can turn a community of accountability into a community that enables abuse. (pg. 164)

Contemporary writings and media present examples of the implications of abuse on Native American women. These implications include false, negative stereotypes that contrast with how Native women were depicted in the past. Nancy Shoemaker (1995) notes that women in history are often romanticized in order to make a better story. She uses examples of Pocahontas and Sacagawea and their desire to become a part of white culture. The 'Indian Princess' stereotype started long ago and is still present in contemporary society. The idea of this stereotype is that Native beauties are so infatuated with the white man that she is willing to give up her cultural heritage and marry into the 'civilized' white culture. The Native woman is never portrayed as a powerful character, but instead she is always lured into the dominant culture. Domestic violence and sexual assault align with these stereotypes because these acts make Native women feel inferior and weak. They give into the stereotype of the dominant culture and of the past. Tribes must also go back to the traditional beliefs that femininity and women are spiritual.

Femininity in Native American culture is supported by powers of the natural world. For example, childbirth in *Waterlily* (1988) is illustrated to be an extremely spiritual and empowering process for women. The men of the tiyospaye have to prove themselves through ceremonies such as the Sun Dance, whereas women do not. This suggests that Native American cultures support a matriarch; however, stereotypes don't acknowledge this idea. Another stereotype dominant culture holds is that these women are lazy. This

may be accounted for the fact that women don't report the abuse or may be seen as doing nothing to prevent it. Another discerning stereotype that accompanies violence is the idea that Native women are alcoholics (Clinton, 1984). As stated earlier, women often suppress their negative memories of the abuse with alcohol, however; this stereotype is by no means accurate. It is important for contemporary communities to see how the abuse of these women is affecting society as a whole. We should not be so quick to believe what the dominant culture and media portrayals of minority groups are accurate to make a better story.

In conclusion, it is evident how much of an impact domestic violence and abuse has on contemporary society. Because statistics don't accurately depict the numbers of rape and assault on present-day reservations, it is truly startling just how often this occurs. The stereotypes and implications that come along with violence and abuse is not only unfair, but also untrue in the way it portrays Native women. Domestic violence is a scary and tragic reality for so many women in Indian Country because tribal governments aren't equipped to handle the crime, and women fear what will happen if they report the violence. All in all, violence on reservations has been an ongoing issue that dates back to the pre-reservation era and beginning of the boarding school system, and continues today. In order to reverse this reality for women it is important to alter our communities' mindsets, regardless of the obstacles it may bring.

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# Abraham Lincoln and America's Unfinished Business

By Miles A Browne

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator unalienable rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

*Declaration of Independence*

The statement "all men are created equal" and that they had a right for an unchallenged "pursuit of happiness" had no practical use in building a case for the separation from Great Britain. However, The Founding Fathers recognized that their society was imperfect and that future generations should be encouraged and enabled to create a more equal and just society. Author Thomas Jefferson whose words created the Mission Statement for a new nation explained the reason "...was to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm to command their assent..."

Abraham Lincoln hailed Jefferson as the man who "had the coolness, forecast and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document as abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there"...and "that to-day and all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and stumbling block to the very harbingers and re-appearing tyranny and oppression."

He understood that future generations of Americans would harbor men like Congressman Petit from Indiana who stated that equality was a "self-evident lie." And there would be men who would promote, or find nothing wrong with placing boys into the blackness of coal mines; working men twelve hours a day, six days a week, fifty -two weeks of the year; denying people

the right to vote; under-funding public schools; paying women less than men for the same job and developing schemes that create uneven opportunities for equality, life, liberty and happiness.

On his way to Washington president-elect Lincoln recalled, "Back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book...Weems' Life of Washington. I remember all the accounts there given of the battlefields and struggles for the liberties of the country and the great hardships of that time fixed themselves in my memory. I recollect thinking then, even though a boy I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for...that something was even more than national independence; that something that held out a promise to all people of the world for all time to come;...(and) shall be perpetual in accordance with the central idea for which the struggle was made." During all his political life he shared with his fellow citizens his attachment to the Declaration of Independence. He stated, "I have never had a political feeling that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." He wanted each American generation to "readopt the Declaration of Independence and harmonize with it."

Lincoln actively supported the original ideas for which the struggle was made: The proposition that all men were created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The words and hopes of the Founding Fathers should be a unifying objective if they are to be the centerpiece of our democracy. Without it we cannot have a nation to be proud of. With it, "we the people" have no limit of good we might achieve.

Some said Government should do not more than protect its people from insurrection and foreign invasion and spend the rest of its time indifferently observing the way its people played out the cards that fate had dealt them. Lincoln rejected that opinion. He labeled it an absence of responsibility leading to a do nothing political platform. "The legitimate object of government," he said, "is to do for the people what needs to be done, which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves. There were many such things...roads, public schools, charities, pauperism, orphanages...and the machinery of government itself." For

Lincoln, an individual's pursuit of happiness should be supported by "a government of the people, by the people and for the people." Illinois Republican Senator Owen Lovejoy put it this way. "What is beneficial to the people cannot be detrimental to the government, for in this country the interests of both are identical...with us the government is simply the agency through which the people act for their own benefit."

Lincoln's life, writings and speeches offered Americans a government that would work aggressively, tirelessly and with compassion to give all a chance they might not have found alone. He did it by fighting for job creating projects such as the building of bridges, railroad construction and other projects that some decried as excessive government. He gave help for universal education, help for agriculture, help and land for the rural family struggling for a start.

In a Milwaukee, Wisconsin, speech Lincoln told his audience of farmers that all economic wealth came from labor, that "capital is the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed." A healthy American society worked so that "The prudent, penniless beginner in the world labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land, for himself; then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him." This was the idea behind free labor, "which creates a just and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way for all—gives hope to all, and energy, and progress, and improvement of conditions to all." But Lincoln did not stop there as he could easily have done; he determined that hard-working producers were the backbone of the American system. He went on to call for education to help every man to use his labor most efficiently, to help them rise more quickly and further.

Lincoln pointed out that there were some who believed that workers were the bottom rung of society and wanted their workers uneducated, with strong backs and weak minds. To this, Lincoln responded, "Free Labor says no!" A man's brain guides, directs, and protects his labor, and every mind "should be cultivated and improved, by whatever will add to its capacity for performing its charge." "In one word," Lincoln somewhat imprecisely thundered "free labor insists on universal education." The world was changing he explained, and people would need to be able to farm intelligently, "deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of

soil.” Only this could prevent oppression, whether from “crowned-kings, money-kings (or) land-kings.”

In his remaining remarks he stated that while conservatives rested their worldview on the Constitution’s protection of property, he looked instead to the ideas of equality outlined in the Declaration of Independence to create a new and prosperous future. “All men” were included in the Declaration of Independence, he insisted, and when given an opportunity to create new societies in the West, it was imperative for a just and prosperous society that the principle of equality of opportunity be honored for every man. He concluded his Milwaukee speech: “By the best cultivation of the physical world, beneath and around us; and the intellectual and moral world within us, we shall secure an individual, social, and political prosperity and happiness, whose course shall be onward and upward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away.”

Lincoln understood that many Americans belonged to the working poor. He knew that they had little influence regarding their working conditions and in determining the value of their labor. He felt that the remedy of the situation would need them to band together as brothers and sisters and speak with one voice. Conservatives warned that free labor was subject to unrest and strikes. Lincoln agreed and thought why not! During a New England speaking tour in March 1860, he stated, “I am glad to see that a system prevails ...that would allow laborers to strike when they want to...I like the system which lets a man quit when he wants to, and wish that it prevail everywhere.” Lincoln argued for a fair system that would enable a majority to finish ahead of where they started in life. He wanted “...every man to have a chance—by which he can better his condition.” The collective efforts of ordinary workers, with support from the government, brought us the forty hour week, paid vacations, safe working conditions, and an end to child labor. Lincoln believed that equality embraced every state, every race, every religion; every nationality and every class—until it included even “the penniless beginner” and the “poor man seeking his chance.”

Lincoln extended a guiding light which led to the nation’s declared purpose: “To form a perfect union.” We need to overcome all that divides us into Blue States and Red States so that we can avoid a Lincoln concern that, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” However,

when old bigotries seem to be dying, there are reactionaries who push back; when stereotypes and hatreds are ebbing there are those who work to perpetuate them; when those with calloused hands worked hard to gain a rightful share of America's bounty that their efforts had help to create and had gradually gained acceptance, fairness and civility there are institutions, organizations and even a political party pushing back.

In Lincoln's time one in seven Americans were slaves. Noted political commentator Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. evaluated the Southern way of life which "justified itself by a political and philosophical repudiation of a free society... (it) organized itself with mounting rigor against ideas of human dignity and freedom, because such ideas inevitably threatened their own system...it outlaws what a believer in democracy can only regard as the abiding values of man." Sadly, there are elements of this political philosophy still alive in America.

Because of the efforts of the push backers challenges to equality and a just society reappear. Today, a very few affluent Americans are reaping the benefits of the American economy while millions of poverty stricken children enter aging and understaffed school buildings without the benefit of a nutritious breakfast. Unless there is a change in America's political environment these children will live out their lives in poverty no matter how many hours of labor they work during the days, weeks, and years of their lives. Their efforts are not valued by the employers even though Lincoln believed, "all economic wealth came from labor" and that "capital is the fruit of labor."

Today, the Midwest's highways are home to hundreds of convenience stores. In the early hours of the work day it is not the CEO asleep in his bed that is the most valued, it is the underpaid, under-valued baker shaping and baking the donuts and rolls who is among the most valuable players in the creation of wealth. They and the countless others who share the same circumstance deserve an opportunity for a "pursuit of happiness".

There are Americans who work tirelessly to meet the needs of "...public schools, charities, pauperism, orphanages...the penniless beginner and the poor man..." There are other Americans who look at the unequal conditions and deny them, pretending instead that we are all one great "shining city on a hill." Lincoln believed that there cannot be "shining city" when

so many of American people are denied the promises of the Declaration. Lincoln's words are asking Americans to be committed to live his truths in words and action.

Lincoln evaluated the Founding Fathers as "wise statesmen, as they were, they knew the tendency of prosperity to bred tyrants, so they established these great self-evident truths, when in some distant future some man, some faction, some interest should set up a doctrine that none but the rich men, none but the white men...were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness their posterity might take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began."

Today there are millions of Americans for whom the pursuit of happiness is not yet an attainable reality, but only an empty illusion. It would be an act of ingratitude if Americans end the struggle of inclusion because it is over for some of us. Americans must renew a commitment for Lincoln's enduring truths and go forward enlarging the greatness of the nation and achieve the ultimate justice that can only be found in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

## **Digging for History's Roots Shows That Cather and Cleary**

### **Created Great Plains Heroines**

Dr. Marilyn A. Carlson Aronson

Digging for history's roots opens up countless doors into the past and allows the modern scholar to understand the experiences of many females, who became plains heroines, earth-goddesses, earth-mothers, and artist-women in their stories of the unbelievable challenges of survival on the prairies. In my opinion, two writers stand out in recreating this understanding: Willa Cather and Kate M. Cleary. According to John J. Murphy (1997), there is "an exploding field of [Willa] Cather scholarship, and any critical survey must begin with James Woodress' Willa Cather: A Literary Life (1987)" (Murphy, Updating the Literary West, p. 658). In addition, to that comprehensive study are works by such scholars as Susan Rosowski's edition of Willa Cather's Studies 1, 2, 3 (1990, 1993, 1996); L. Brent Bohlke's edition of Willa Cather in Person (1986, 1990); Marilyn Arnold's A Reader's Companion to the Fiction of Willa Cather (1993); Harold Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations of Willa Cather's My Antonia (1987); Merrill Skaggs' After the World Broke in Two: The Later Novels of Willa Cather (1990), and John J. Murphy's Critical Essays on Willa Cather (1984) and My Antonia: The Road Home (1989, to name only a few examples of the many books, articles, and essays devoted to Cather scholarship since 1980 (Cited by Murphy, 1997, 658-669). In fact, at last count, there were over

1,500 on-line citations for Cather in the MLA bibliography. Recently, The Cather Journalism Project through the University of Nebraska is a major attempt to edit for the first time, the complete journalistic writings of Willa Cather. (Jewell, A., ed., Willa Cather Archive, updated May 2014, WCA Index to Journalism, web, 15 April, 2015, p. 1, <http://cather.unl.edu/>). Yet, no one else, that I know, has compared Willa Cather's life and writings to those of Kate M. Cleary, another Nebraska author. The fascinating stories by Willa Cather and Kate M. Cleary, American authors and pioneers, mirror the experiences of many plains heroines. Both authors create characters that embody the earth-goddess, earth-mother, and artist-woman as their creative sources for vision, displaying courage and strength of purpose. Like numerous female artists at the close of the nineteenth century, both writers re-created somber experiences for their readers. Both Willa Cather and Kate M. Cleary turned their own lives and experiences on the Nebraska frontier into literature that was based on real frontier isolation, real survival challenges, and on experiences based on responses to this isolation (Concept from Bowden, 1961, The Dungeon of the Heart: Human Isolation and the American Novel, p.43-54). Both showed love and respect for Nebraska's pioneer heritage: the land. Both portrayed small-town prairie life and the limitations of the female artist as an individual, who must leave the prairie to be nourished and appreciated" (Carlson Aronson, 1995, Heritage of the Great Plains, p 5-16). Willa Cather, author of the Nebraska novels O Pioneers! (1913), The Song of the Lark (1915), My Antonia (1918), One of Ours (1922), A Lost Lady (1923), and Lucy Gayheart (1935) became a prominent American author. In fact, George Dekker speculates in The American Historical Romance (1987) that "Cather may well be the preeminent American historical romance-novelist

of our century” (Dekker, 1987). However, Kate M. Cleary, little known writer, helps to balance the ever-emerging story of Nebraska life on the Great Plains.

Like Willa Cather, Kate M. Cleary did leave the prairie. Unlike Willa Cather, Kate M. Cleary left, but her private pain continued. Her complete emotional collapse resulted in extended treatment for morphine addiction and commitment to an insane asylum, although she had been declared perfectly sane. Thanks to the research of Susanne K. George, Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, the life and works of Kate M. Cleary can be compared with writings by other authors. In September, 1997, the Nebraska State Historical Society asked me to write a book review of Susanne K. George’s Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography with Selected Works. After completing that absorbing account of Cleary’s life, I began the research for a comparison of the life and works of Willa Cather and Kate M. Cleary. Both authors wrote about small towns around sixty miles apart near the Kansas border; both towns were established after Nebraska gained statehood on March 1, 1867 (Red Cloud established as a county seat April, 1871; Hubbell established in 1880 and grew to 100 buildings in 90 days); both towns lay east of major Loess Hills region and between the Republican and Little Blue Rivers, and both authors wrote during the same historical era (Cleary 1863-1905; Cather 1873-1947).

In 1884, Charles Cather [Willa’s father] moved his family (including children Willa, Roscoe, Douglas, and Jessica) to Red Cloud, Nebraska, the county seat to open a loan and insurance office. Here in Red Cloud, Willa Cather developed a life-long relationship with members of the Miner family and met Annie Sadilek, the prototype of Antonia Shimerada in My Antonia (Murphy, 1989, My Antonia The Road Home, p. xi). In 1884, Kate M. Cleary moved from Chicago, Illinois, with her husband Michael Cleary who had opened a lucrative lumber business

named Cleary Lumber and Coal in Hubbell, Nebraska. From 1887-1897, she bore six children and helped support her family by publishing hundreds of stories, poems, and articles. (George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary, p. 1-244). Willa Cather spent thirteen formative years in Nebraska (1883-1896); Kate M. Cleary spent fourteen years of her adult life in Hubbell, Nebraska (1884-1898) (George, 1997, p.1-56) Yet, both writers used their Nebraska frontier experiences as sources for their later writings.

Willa Cather's friend, local colorist Sarah Orne Jewett, once gave Cather the following advice regarding her writing:

Write honestly about the places and the people that you know well, share with others the feelings and aspirations involved in growing up in offbeat places, help people know each other better, develop in oneself and encourage in others the gift of sympathy of one's own fictional world and the world of others (Quoted in Murphy, 1989, My Antonia The Road Home, p. 2).

In James Woodress' biography of Cather, he says, "More than most writers, Cather presents readers with the chance to compare biographical data with its transmutation into art" (Woodress, 1987, Willa Cather: A Literary Life). For example Stephen Vincent and Rosemary Benet's Cather interview published in 1940 addresses Cather, the artist: "What makes the artist?...Let us take the case of Miss Cather, for here we have a genuine artist.... Her work is entirely American. . .the feeling of the frontier, the look of the land and the light in Nebraska could not be captured by a stranger. Though the style has deep French roots, the flower is American" (Quoted by Bohlke, 1990, p. 133 from New York Herald Tribune Books, 15 December, 1940). To illustrate Cather's answer to her artistic writing in creating people of the soil. L. Brent Bohlke (1986) records the following Cather quote:

“Is *My Antonia* a good book because it is the story of the soil?” we asked. She shook her head, “No, no decidedly no. There is no formula: there is no reason. It was a story of people I knew. I expressed a mood, the core of which was like a folk song, a thing Grieg could have written. That it was powerfully tied to the soil had nothing to do with it. *Antonia* was tied to the soil....The story had as its purpose the desire to express the quality of these people. (Quoted by Bohlke, 1986, p. 72 from New York Times Book Review, 21 December 1924, p. 11).

Since this paper focuses on the ways Cather’s and Cleary’s lives and writings compare, that aspect will be presented in some detail. First, both authors create characters, who embody the earth-goddess, earth-mother, and artist-woman as their creative sources for vision, displaying courage, and strength of purpose.

Willa Cather’s heroic female heroines do appear as a revision of American literary history. Her themes, using heroic females, provide neither the struggle of the pioneer nor the conflict between generations, but rather the development and self-discovery of the novel’s protagonist. In fact, the prairie novels, O Pioneers! (1913), The Song of the Lark (1915), My Antonia (1918), A Lost Lady (1923), and Lucy Gayheart (1935) portray strong heroines, who are vibrant protagonists, adept and capable of survival on the tough, Nebraska prairie. Each heroine—Alexandra Bergson, Thea Kronberg, Antonia Shimerada, Marian Forrester, and Lucy Gayheart represent the American pioneer woman as a person whose physical and cultural contributions helped to civilize the West.

For example, in O Pioneers! (1913) Alexandra Bergson could be called the epic heroine because her character never changes. Her strength of purpose, her dependability, and her kindness are constant throughout the novel. Moreover, she appears capable of controlling her emotions and proceeding with the business of everyday life. Although Alexandra is a fully-developed character, she does not express her emotions freely. For this reason, some critics

view her as a flat one-dimensional figure. Helen W. Stauffer writes, "Although Alexander does develop personal dimension through her relationship with Carl and her suffering after the deaths of Marie and Emil, she remains sexually reticent, mistrusts passion, and favors safe love between friends" (Stauffer, 1987, A Literary History of the American West, p. 688). In fact, Alexandra Bergson sacrifices her personal life to cultivate the Nebraska prairie. Almost an androgynous character, Alexander is tall, strong, serious, thoughtful, and dresses like a young soldier. Cather writes, "She wore a man's long ulster not as if it were an affliction, but as if it were very comfortable and belonged to her" (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers! p. 19). Cather even uses a plot circumstance in which the European father through death and incompetence cedes the responsibility for the renewal of the family to his American-born daughter. John Bergson knows that Alexander is the only one of his children who "Reads the papers, follows the markets, and learns from neighbors' mistakes.... [She is the] one to whom he could entrust the future of his family and the possibilities of the hard-won land" (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!, p. 18-19). He instructs his two sons to follow the direction of their sister: "I want you to keep the land together and be guided by your sister....[Alexandra] knows my wishes....and will manage the best she can" (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!, p. 21). At age nineteen, Alexandra Bergson becomes homesteader, preserver, and savior for her Nebraska prairie family. In O Pioneers!, Cather gives the classic struggle of mankind versus nature a new twist by pitting a woman against nature. Alexandra seeks wholeness, self-identity, and purpose. Her major goal is to preserve the family's heritage: the land. Cather's love for the land manifests itself in her description of Alexandra Bergson's success story. Cather writes:

The Divide is now thickly populated. The rich soil yields heavy harvests; the dry, bracing climate and smoothness of the land make labor easy for men and beasts....The old wild

country, the struggle in [Alexandra] was destined to succeed while so many men broke their hearts and died....[Now], a big white house stood on a hill....There were so many sheds and outbuildings grouped about it that the place looked like a tiny village....Any one thereabouts would have told you that this was one of the richest farms on the Divide, and that the farmer was a woman, Alexandra Bergson. (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!, p. 57-63).

Truly, Cather portrays Alexandra as an earth goddess, adept, and resourceful in conquering the prairie. Like Walt Whitman's hero in the poem "Pioneers! O Pioneers," Alexandra replicated the heroic male individuality needed on the frontier. Like a true heroine, Alexandra applies her knowledge to everyday problems. Her resourcefulness includes six major decisions: (1) she pays passage for other Swedes to come to America. This act contributes to her labor supply; (2) she experiments with new farming methods such as planting alfalfa as a green legume crop; (3) she befriends new immigrants who come to the Nebraska soil; (4) she sends her brother, Emil, to the university because she senses that his artistic drive would wither on the harsh prairie; (5) she expands the farm that she inherits to neighboring fields and becomes as rich as the robber barons; (6) she embraces new ideas from state agricultural schools and land-grant colleges and implements them successfully. For an 1883 heroine, Alexandra is amazing by all standards. Alexandra's love for the land correctly places this novel in western regional literature, a genre that expresses the pioneer love affair with the land. In fact, Cather writes that the land "was the mightiest of all lovers" (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!, p. 210). The land had become Alexandra's first love. When Carl Linstrum asks her to marry him and go to Alaska, Alexandra asks, "You would never ask me to go away for good would you?" (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!, p. 210). His knowing reply is "Of course not, my dearest. I think I know how you feel about this country as well as you know yourself" (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!,

p. 210). Although Alexandra cares for Carl Linstrum, she loves the land the most. Like all true pioneers, Alexandra realizes that she owns the land, temporarily. Pioneers are people who see something within the land that dreamers like Carl Linstrum, will never see. As an estate builder, Alexander says, “we come and go, but the land is always here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who own it—for a little while” (Cather, 1988, O Pioneers!, p. 229). While Cather makes room for the dreamer and artist within her novels, her heroines in her prairie novels remain earth goddesses. (Carlson Aronson, 1995, Plains Goddesses: Heroines in Willa Cather’s Prairie Novels,” Heritage of the Plains, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 5-16).

In comparing Cather’s and Cleary’s writings, the question arises, “Does Cleary also use heroic celibate female individuals as the maternal source of the home place and as the matrix of civilization?” (Concept from Levy, 1992, Fiction of the Home Place, p. 64). The answer to that question is “no,” probably because Kate M. Cleary writes from the perspective of a married woman and mother of six children. Her female heroines are strong protagonists, but they are not heroic celibate individuals. As married women, these individuals were probably “a composite of several women that Cleary knew in Hubbell, Nebraska, and they represented the strengths and the shortcomings of the pioneer women” (George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 50). An excellent example of a heroic pioneer woman occurs in the novel, Like a Gallant Lady (1897). This memorable character, Maria McLelland, reappears in Cleary’s stories and sketches. As a character, Mrs. McLelland “is not easily overlooked. She is six feet two and exceedingly stout. She wears a black alpaca flounced, a net fichu, gold-rimmed glasses which cost \$8.00, and has snowy store teeth. She presents herself at [Cleary’s] kitchen door whenever the desire to ‘run over’ takes possession of her” (Quoted by George, 1997, Kate M.

Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 12). Mrs. McLelland's entrance is so powerful that it interrupts nature:

Suddenly the sun was shut out. A huge shadow wavered across the floor. A mighty tread set the dishes dancing. A gigantic form, gowned in clean and crackling calico, loomed up before them. A square, clean-cut, alert, shrewd old face beamed down upon them. [Collapsing upon a chair, Mrs. McLelland laments the problems she has with her legs] "I soak 'em in coal oil, an I rub 'em with turpentine. Pa kin tell you I used up seven bottles of Indian Infallible Remedy on 'em, an' they that stiff and hurtful yet I say to Pa sometimes I wish I was like the cobbler down to Bubble that supports a family on one leg—he ain't got two to bother with 'em they git feelin' mean like mine does." (Quoted by George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 49).

Cleary creates characters like Cather, who portrays her characters, complete with a "blind side". Like A Gallant Lady shows Mrs. McLelland's vulnerable side because she is her husband's second wife. His first wife, Annie, died in childbirth before she was nineteen years old. Maria McLelland reveals her feelings and vulnerability to her friend, Ivera:

"His first wife she was only a bit of a girl—friv'lous, I judge, as they make 'em. She allus had pretty clothes, an' they say she could sing sweeter'n any bird. But she couldn't cook none to speak on, an' she never saved a carpet rag, or pieced a quilt. She was jest fearful friv'lous—Annie was....Pa sets a heap by me. But somehow, when he talks nights—some folks does you know—I ain't ever heerd him propitiate my name....It's allus her'n. Seems like he keeps a-dreamin' of that little thing that was berrid with her baby when she wasn't but nineteen come her next birthday. Tain't reel satisfactory after you've been layin' down by the side of a man fur mor'n thirty year to have him stir an' call you Annie when your given name's Maria." (Cleary, Like a Gallant Lady, p. 276-277, Quoted by George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 49-50).

Kate M. Cleary received mixed reviews for her novel, Like A Gallant Lady (1897), published when she was thirty-four. According to Susanne K. George (1997), Cleary was criticized on style, but applauded by most reviewers for the bleak portrayal of life on the Nebraska plains:

Post Express, 15 January 1898, Rochester, New York: This book is a photographic reproduction of the living death of a woman's life on the prairies of the West, a tale of drudgery from dawn to dark, a study of life that is intellectual starvation. It is the biography of the life of a refined Eastern woman in a dreary Nebraska town. The pessimistic tone is in accord with the life portrayed, though there is no lack of grim humor....Like a Gallant Lady is destined to take its place with the best work of Hamlin Garland and Mrs. Peattie." (Quoted by George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 51-52).

Kate M. Cleary uses her Nebraska experiences as source material for her three novels and over 339 stories, articles, and poems, yet her Nebraska experiences were bitter-sweet. In Hubbell, Nebraska, she arrived as a new bride; helped build, furnish, and loved her new home; gave birth to her six children (James Mansfield 1887; Marguerite M. 1889; Gerald Vernon 1890; Rosemarie Catherine 1892; Vera Valentine 1894; and Edward Sheridan 1897), buried two of those children, Marguerite 1894 and Rosemarie 1895; faced the tragedy of Rosemarie's death without Michael being present because of his own recurring bouts with consumption, which caused him to return to Chicago; wrote prolifically due to her loneliness and the family's need for additional income, and experienced severe depression from 1895 until her death in 1905. These bitter-sweet experiences can be traced in her many writings.

Both Cather and Cleary create strong protagonists, who embody the earth-goddess, earth-mother, and artist-woman as their creative sources for vision, courage, and purpose. Both writers also create somber experiences for their readers. For example, somber realism and starkness appears in Cleary's "A Prairie Sketch" published in the Chicago Tribune on 7 July 1895. This sketch draws on Cleary's grief over the death of her two daughters who died only three months apart, as well as the isolation from adequate medical care which prevailed on the prairie in the late nineteenth century:

The woman sat in a rocking chair, drawn close to the sitting-room stove. She held a great shapeless roll of blankets in her arms. These enclosed the naked body of a [six-year old] child and formed a hood over the little quiet, brown head.

"You think there is no hope this time?" the woman asked in a controlled voice. The doctor sitting near shook his head. He was thin, undersized, haggard from overwork, irregular meals, and scant sleep.

With eyes that ached the woman looked down on the wan, blue-lipped little face lying against her shoulder. She was conscious of a throbbing of the soft body. She felt the twitching of an arm.

"There is another spasm beginning," she said. The doctor rose, poured hot water into that already in the bathtub, prepared to combat a third attack. The mother kept looking down on the child's face, such a pretty, gentle face, so spiritualized by suffering. As she gazed a queer short cry came from between the child's lips, a faint, wavering cry. Over its face swept the mysterious change which once seen is ever after recognized. "Look!" breathed the mother, "it is the end!"

The doctor took the slim little wrist between his fingers and held it for an instant. "Yes," he said gently, and turned away. The woman cuddled the child closer in the warm blankets, held it more tightly, bent her head over it. The doctor went away. Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed. The woman did not move. (Quoted by George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 152-155).

Critics faulted Cleary for sentimentalism that sometimes flawed her realistic stories, yet Charles Fanning (1987) in The Irish Voice in America wrote that "'Cleary's Nebraska stories are an effective antidote to the anti-urban romantic pastoralism of the period which promoted the belief that moving to the country would solve all Irish-American ills'" (Fanning, 1987, p. 180, George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 37).

Both Cather and Cleary turned their lives and experiences on the Nebraska frontier into literature based on real frontier isolation and on experiences based on responses to this isolation. The fact that Willa Cather's material comes from personal experiences is documented in Eleanor Hinman's interview with Cather, published in the Lincoln Sunday Star, 6 November 1921:

“I don’t gather material for my stories. All my stories have been written with material that was gathered—no, God save us! Not gathered but absorbed—before I was fifteen years old...”

“The ideas for all my novels have come from things that happened around Red Cloud when I was a child. I was all over the country then, on foot, on horseback, and in our farm wagons. My nose went poking into nearly everything. It happened that my mind was constructed for the particular purpose of absorbing impressions and retaining them...I have never drawn but one portrait of an actual person. That was the mother of the neighbor family, in My Antonia. She was the mother of my childhood chums in Red Cloud...All my other characters are drawn from life, but they are all composites of three or four persons.” (Quoted by Bohlke, 1990, Willa Cather in Person, p. 43-45).

Cleary also responded to the isolation experienced on the Nebraska plains by writing prodigiously. Susanne K. George (1997) records this fact in Kate M. Cleary: A Literary

#### Biography:

The deaths of Marguerite and Rosemarie precipitated an outpouring of writing from Cleary as she memorialized her beloved daughters in stories and poems...Cleary wrote prodigiously in 1895.... In addition, the publication of her stories and poems helped alleviate her financial worries in Michael’s absence. Many of her best stories depicting the harsh life of pioneers on the plains were published during this year: “The Camper,” “A Man Out of Work,” “A Race Horse to the Plow,” “The Judas Tree,” “A Western Wooing,” and “A Dust Storm in Nebraska.” Deterministic in tone, these tales document the struggles of early settlers, especially women, trapped in an indifferent wilderness or held hostage by unremitting biological forces. (George, 1997, p. 34-36).

Like Cather, Cleary loved and respected Nebraska’s land. Her poem “To Nebraska” prefaces the novel Like A Gallant Lady and illustrates the inherent beauty of the land, but also shows the ironic ambiguity of her love/hate relationship with Nebraska:

To the village and the plain  
Of a land of toil and pain,  
Of a land where drought devoureth  
Making labor void and vain;  
Where ambitions cease to glow,  
Where high hopes are buried low,  
And the mad mirage of other  
Lands, the sweetest thing we know.

To a land that yet shall be  
Fair and fertile, proud and free,  
Golden grain and happy homesteads,  
'Twixt the east and western sea—  
From a woman whom the west  
Harbored bride, and slave, and guest,  
Has been kind to—has been cruel—  
And has given worst—and best! (George, 1997, p.203).

Cleary shows through her heroine, Ivera, in Like A Gallant Lady what her early impressions of Nebraska may have been. This perception is noted by Susanne K. George: “It is different from what I imagined. I’ve always thought of Nebraska as level. I find its prairies like the waves of a subsiding sea.” (Cleary, 1897, p. 34). Later in the novel after Ivera has spent a hard winter, she says, “The plains stretched away, boundless, and mysterious. The sky, frigate with whitish clouds, loomed low and light. Between these crept the silence, the awful, oppressive, overwhelming silence of the prairies...The only people who associate solitude, romance, and that sort of thing with the plains are those who write about them without having had any personal experience” (Cleary, 1897, Like A Gallant Lady, p. 266-267, Noted by George, 1997, Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography, p. 47-48).

Both Cather and Cleary truthfully portray small-town prairie life and the limitations of the artist as an “individual who must leave the prairie to be nourished and appreciated” (Carlson Aronson, 1995, Heritage of the Great Plains, p. 5-16). This portrait of the artist leaving the plains occurs in Cather’s O Pioneers!, My Antonia, and The Song of the Lark. According to Helen F. Levy, “The woman artist drains passion, personal life, birthing labor, all creative manifestations of her personality into an artistic discipline....Cather felt that America neglected

the creativity of the immigrant woman's heritage" (Levy, 1992, Fiction of the Home Place, p. 79, 84).

Likewise, Cleary's life and writings show the limitations of the female artist, who must leave the plains to be nourished and appreciated. Cleary left Nebraska in 1898, returning to Chicago. There she published prolifically to "keep the wolf from the door" (George, 1997, p. 57). According to Susanne K. George,

"Cleary's western satire provides firsthand interpretations of life in the New West. Even though she exposed her neighbors' and friends' social facades—which were like the typical western building's impressive false front, designed to make it appear more imposing on the vast stretches of Nebraska plains—she also captured the diverse contents within. Never cutting or cruel, her humor mocked the pretenses of society, not the women and men striving to bring a reassuring civility to an isolated frontier. (George, 1997, p. 60-61).

Cleary's dream was to become a famous writer. However, her literary and personal trials parallel the heroine's life in her story, "The Destiny of Delores," published in the Chicago Tribune 8 November 1900. In this story Delores, the heroine, naively leaves home, hoping to become a writer:

"I have been scribbling all my life. I want to be a writer. I shall not be content with a little success. I must become famous. And I shall. I've been reading a great deal about women who have succeeded. They almost all went to cities. Many worked hard for a time on newspapers. I can do it—I know I can. It's my destiny." (Cited by George, 1997, p. 71).

Perhaps the last poem that Cleary wrote, before her untimely death on 16 July 1905 at age forty-one, was entitled "Teddie." It is speculated that she intended this poem to be a gift to her youngest son. Susanne K. George states, "When she ascended the steps of her apartment for the last time, hand in hand with Teddie, she may have wanted to show him what she had

just written for him. It was fitting that her last poem revealed not only her enduring love for her children, but also her all-encompassing love of life” (George, 1997, p. 227). Two stanzas from the eleven stanza poem show this fact:

I love the world with all its brave endeavor,  
I love its winds and floods, and suns and sands,  
But oh, I love—most deeply and forever—  
The clinging touch of timid little hands.

And as I love the rank, dry prairie grasses,  
And as I love the crumbling crimson rose,  
And leaping streamlets in the forest passes,  
And music crashing to supreme repose. (Quoted by George, 1997, p. 227-228).

In comparing Willa Cather and Kate M. Cleary, my intent has not been to rank them; rather, it has been to discuss their similarities and to reflect on the difficulties faced by female authors at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. On one hand, “Willa Cather succeeded in living a full literary life, becoming an internationally acclaimed author.” (George, 1997, p. 103). In the words of researcher, Jamie Ambrose (1988), Willa Cather died of having lived....Her writing can be seen as an embodiment, a mirror of the artist’s life. Her life and art were so intertwined, indeed, that at times not even she could tell them apart.” (Ambrose, 1988, Willa Cather, xiv, p. 147).

On the other hand, “Kate M. Cleary typifies America’s neglected women regionalists, whose work, although deeply rooted in place, represents universal emotions and conditions....Cleary, too, deserves recognition for her contributions to American literature. In her poetry, Cleary’s romantic sensibility and pastoral subjects reflect society’s continuing intrigue with the American Garden of Eden: the frontier....Cleary’s more realistic and naturalistic works set in the Nebraska prairies, provide an opposing view to the idealized

agrarian myths. Her powerful depiction of the hardships of the pioneer West, viewed firsthand by a woman who endured the droughts and blizzards of Nebraska and who knew its inhabitants on a first-hand basis, is a truthful record of the difficulties of settlement times.” (George, 1997, p. 103-104).

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# **Blight or Alright? Exploring Residential Perceptions of North Dakota's Expanding Energy Production Landscapes**

Leiya Crawford, Carla Barnes and Haley Hanna

For the past five years western North Dakota has been the focus of national wide media attention as a purported “wild west” featuring a drastic increase in criminal activity. Reports of terrorized local residents and organized crime dominate local media discourse. This paper compiles and compares regional crime perceptions (via media report analysis, survey data, and interviews) with criminal statistics (via state, county, and municipal criminal databases) in the Bakken. This paper considers the Bakken oil boom region to consist of the western North Dakota counties that have witnessed the greatest increase in population due to oil production (Williams, Mountrail, McKenzie, Dunn, Stark, and Ward). Statistics from 2000 to 2008 are considered pre-boom with 2009-2014 considered “boom.” The conclusions of the paper are significant for better understanding the impact of the oil boom on both public safety and residential perceptions of place.

North Dakota has been known to have a very slow growing, and sometimes even declining, population. In 1960, North Dakota's population was 632,446. In 2005, North Dakota's population was 634,605.<sup>1</sup> In forty-five years, the population had only grown by about two thousand people; compared to other states in the nation, this is not very much. In those forty-five years the numbers fluctuated but never rose above 686,000, which was it's ultimate high in

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<sup>1</sup> FBI UCS Annual Crime Reports, *North Dakota Population and Number of Crimes, 1960 – 2013, 1997-2014*, accessed March 3, 2015, <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/ndcrimn.htm>.

1984.<sup>2</sup> It also never sank lower than 615,000 in 1969.<sup>3</sup> It is hard to get an accurate count of population in North Dakota as of 2014. First of all, the census was taken in 2010, which put the population of North Dakota at 674,629. Any numbers after that are only estimates. Second, the estimates do not include the large numbers of people who are working in North Dakota, but maintain residency out of state.<sup>4</sup> We would assume this is a large number of people, as many who come to work in the oil field do not declare residency in North Dakota. Thus, there is probably actually a lot more people who have migrated to North Dakota in the past few years than these numbers portray.

As one can see, North Dakota has never been an area that draws people to it. It has and remains to be a dominantly agricultural and rural state. Thus that means that unless one wants to start farming or ranching, there is not a big pull to want to come to North Dakota. North Dakota began to see an increase in population after the oil boom really got started in the western part of the state around 2008. Hundreds of people started to flood into North Dakota in hopes of “getting rich quick” from the many available opportunities in the oil field and also in the neighboring towns. This boom happened at a time when the nation was experiencing a high rate of unemployment. Many people were willing to come to North Dakota in order to start over and make a better living for themselves and their families because they might not have been able to get a job anywhere else. Williams County was ranked as the fastest growing county in the nation and Stark County was ranked as the fourth.<sup>5</sup> From 2008 to 2009, the

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> North Dakota Department of Commerce. *North Dakota Communities, Counties Ranked Among Nation's Fastest Growing*, 2014, accessed March 7, 2015.

<http://www.commerce.nd.gov/news/NorthDakotaCensusEstimatesShowStatewidePopulationGrowth/>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

population jumped from 641,421 to 646,844.6 In one year, the population of North Dakota had jumped almost double the population increase that happened in the entire forty-five years between 1960 and 2005. (Only increased by about 2,000 people)

Many residents of North Dakota are arguing that this increase of “outsiders” (people who move in from out of state) is causing the crime to increase dramatically in the state. The media has really picked up on this idea and North Dakota residents are now getting use to hearing every day on the news about crimes being committed. Whereas before, most North Dakotans say that hearing about a major crime on the news was more of a rare thing. In analyzing media sources, one can see the perceived increase in crime. Looking at an assortment of media sources the number of articles discussing crime and the increase in crime is abundant.

For instance FOX News talked about the huge increase in drug crimes in the state of North Dakota using some examples from Williston. “[...] but the bonanza suddenly flourishing here has also brought with it a dark side: a growing trade in meth, heroin, cocaine and marijuana, the shadow of sinister cartels and newfound violence. [...] What they uncovered was a large-scale methamphetamine ring that had found a home in a state long known for its small-town solitude; [...] the members of this violent gang were all relative newcomers to Williston. They called themselves "The Family," [...] they had plenty of firepower, too: One of the men had an arsenal of 22 weapons. Drugs and dealers are popping up in all kinds of places: Heroin is being trafficked on isolated Indian reservations. Mexican cartels are slowly making inroads in

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6 FBI UCS Annual Crime Reports. *North Dakota Population and Number of Crimes, 1960 – 2013, 1997-2014*, accessed March 3, 2015. <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/ndcrimn.htm>.

small-town America. And hard-core criminals are bringing drugs in from other states, sometimes concealing them in ingenious ways: liquid meth in windshield wiper reservoirs.”<sup>7</sup>

CNN reported a number of crimes in North Dakota as well. “A Watford City pharmacy was robbed of \$16,000 in narcotics, four people were stabbed at a local strip club in Williston, a semi truck crashed into an RV full of people sleeping and the first prostitution ring in decades was busted. Josslyn Finck, the manager of Barrett's pharmacy in nearby Watford City, said [...] before this year, small incidents of shoplifting -- like someone pocketing a Chap Stick -- were the only crimes she had encountered.”<sup>8</sup>

“Assault and battery incidents in Williston rose 171% to 38 charges last year. (2010) Two years ago, there may have been three-to-four violent crimes a week. Now, it's an average of two or three a night. [...] The small towns surrounding the Bakken formation haven't seen prostitution since the last oil boom in the 1980s, said Hanson. But just this month, a prostitution ring of four women was busted through a sting operation by the Williston Police Department, and several other rings are currently being investigated. Reports of rape, which were rarely reported before the boom, now, occur once a week in Williston, said Peterson (but he stressed that these are typically rapes conducted by someone who knows the victim).”<sup>9</sup>

These are just a few of the news sources we analyzed but the stories they tell and how they are told, are all very similar. Many people are becoming more scared of living in North Dakota

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<sup>7</sup> FOX News, *Dark side of ND's oil boom: Meth, Heroin, Cartels All Part of Growing Drug Trade*, April 12, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/04/12/dark-side-nd-oil-boom-meth-heroin-cartels-all-part-growing-drug-trade-1418696252/>.

<sup>8</sup> CNN Money, *Crime turns oil boomtown into Wild West*, October 26, 2011, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America\\_boomtown\\_crime/](http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America_boomtown_crime/).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

because the news sources are demonstrating a huge increase in crime, which the people read every day.

Many people seem to think that murder rates have gone up dramatically, and when one looks at media news sources titles it is easy to tell why. Titles like “Murder, Mayhem and Mexican Mafia Stalk the Bakken Oil Fields”<sup>10</sup>, “Dark side of the boom”<sup>11</sup> and “In North Dakota, a Tale of Oil, Corruption and Death”<sup>12</sup> along with numerous titles about shootings. But when one looks at the numbers, this perceived increase in murder is clearly not the case. There were thirteen murders reported in 2005. This number only increased by one by 2013. This data shows that the murder rates have not increased significantly contrary to popular belief. But other crimes such as rape, robbery aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft have all increased.

In 2005, there were thirteen murders and in 2013 there were fourteen murders. Rape increased from 179 to 237 in 2013. Robbery increased from fifty-three to 151. Aggravated Assault increased by almost three times from 444 to 1,156. Burglary increased from 1,966 to 2,656. Larceny/Theft increased from 9,293 to 10,243. Motor Vehicle Theft increased from 1,030 to 1,228.

Two other main areas that have seen a large increase have been sex and drug trafficking. Both of these crimes have increased dramatically, and as such an FBI office has been set up in Williston to handle the numerous amounts of cases.

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10 The Huffington Post, *Murder, Mayhem and Mexican Mafia Stalk the Bakken Oil Fields*, 2015, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/georgianne-nienaber/murder-mahem-and-mexican-\\_b\\_4646552.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/georgianne-nienaber/murder-mahem-and-mexican-_b_4646552.html).

11 Washington Post, *Dark Side of the Boom*, September 28, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2014/09/28/dark-side-of-the-boom/>.

12 Deborah Sontag and Brent McDonald, New York Times, *In North Dakota, a Tale of Oil, Corruption and Death*, December 28, 2014, accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/29/us/in-north-dakota-where-oil-corruption-and-bodies-surface.html>.

“The North Dakota Century Code states that a person is guilty of human trafficking if that person ‘benefits financially or receives anything of value from knowing participation in human trafficking.’”<sup>13</sup> Most prostitution rings are being operated out of motels and massage parlors. “Paula Bosh, who has worked as a victim specialist with the FBI in Minot for eleven years, never encountered a human trafficking case until recently. She now estimates she has worked with twelve adult victims of sex trafficking in northwest North Dakota in the past one and a half years.”<sup>14</sup> One tactic cops are using to help catch these criminals is setting up sting operations. They put out advertisements that offer young girls who can be sold for sex. They then set up a location for the buyers to meet them, and when the buyers show up, they are arrested. Many people who are involved in sex trafficking are also involved in the drug trade.

Drug crime has gone up in North Dakota and there are now direct routes being linked to North Dakota from the major drug areas such as Mexico, California, and Texas.<sup>15</sup> Prior to the oil boom, drugs passed through many different hands before it ever reached North Dakota. Now there are fewer hands involved in the drug trade and the drugs are coming almost directly from the major drug areas to North Dakota instead of passing through other hands. North Dakota is becoming a site that drug cartels look at as being an optimal place for drug pushing and a place to make a lot of money. That is why many drug gangs are making their way and planting roots in North Dakota. Gang members from California are making a presence in North

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13 Bakken Today, *Human trafficking sting case ends in dismissal, lowered plea*, January 26, 2015, accessed April 9, 2015, [www.bakken.com/event/article/id/38217/publisher\\_ID/82/](http://www.bakken.com/event/article/id/38217/publisher_ID/82/).

14 Amy Dalrymple and Katherine Lymn, Bismarck Tribune, *Trafficking in North Dakota is on the rise, and often the victims can't escape*, January 04, 2015, accessed April 11, 2015, [http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/trafficking-in-north-dakota-is-on-the-rise-and-often/article\\_c7f42282-92b7-11e4-819f-5b05c8a62325.html](http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/trafficking-in-north-dakota-is-on-the-rise-and-often/article_c7f42282-92b7-11e4-819f-5b05c8a62325.html).

15 Jenny Michael, Bismarck Tribune, *Crime up 7.9 percent last year in North Dakota*, July 30, 2013, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/crime-up-percent-last-year-in-north-dakota/article\\_f0a23ec4-f940-11e2-ad25-0019bb2963f4.html](http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/crime-up-percent-last-year-in-north-dakota/article_f0a23ec4-f940-11e2-ad25-0019bb2963f4.html).

Dakota. One gang, Country Boy Crips, is considered to be a very violent gang that deals in women and drugs.<sup>16</sup> Another gang that has been in North Dakota is MS-13. They are considered to be one of the most violent gangs because they had experience in guerrilla warfare.<sup>17</sup>

This rapid influx of people has been challenging for law enforcement, as there has been a spike in calls for service, which has caused the police force to be stretched rather thin. Other crimes such as robbery, aggravated assault, rape, burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft have all increased in North Dakota taking attention away from the other major crimes such as sex trafficking and drug trade. The small-town police forces have been struggling to keep pace. In Watford City, police calls for service have multiplied almost 100 times in a five-year period.<sup>18</sup> In the face of the rising issues, the city's police service has grown from 4 to over 20 in a five year period.<sup>19</sup> In Williston, in a single month in the summer of 2011, the police department received 1,000 calls -- compared to the 4,000 calls it received in the three-year period between 2007 and 2009.<sup>20</sup>

From all of this data, a compelling argument can be made that crime has increased in North Dakota since the oil boom. Police forces in many cities are overwhelmed by the dramatic increase. Calls for service are increasing exponentially and the small police forces cannot keep

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16 Bakken Today, *Shooting case show gang presence in North Dakota*, December 25, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://www.bakkentoday.com/event/article/id/38131/publisher\\_ID/82/](http://www.bakkentoday.com/event/article/id/38131/publisher_ID/82/).

17 HIDTA, *Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS-13)*, accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>.

18 FOX News, *Dark side of ND's oil boom: Meth, Heroin, Cartels All Part of Growing Drug Trade*, April 12, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/04/12/dark-side-nd-oil-boom-meth-heroin-cartels-all-part-growing-drug-trade-1418696252/>.

19 N/A, *North Dakota's Oil Boom No Boom to Cops Struggling to Keep Up*, Daily News, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/north-dakota-oil-boom-no-boon-struggling-cops-article-1.2090549> (accessed 1 May 2015).

20 CNN Money, *Crime turns oil boomtown into Wild West*, October 26, 2011, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America\\_boomtown\\_crime/](http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America_boomtown_crime/).

up. The areas of most concern for police officers today are sex trafficking and the drug trade. These areas have seen a large increase and are extremely dangerous for the entire population of North Dakota, particularly the youth. From 2005 to 2013 there were increases in most types of crime besides murder. Contrary to popular belief the murder rates have not changed much, only increasing by one. Forcible rape, however, has increased by about sixty, robbery has increased by about one hundred, aggravated assault and burglary have both increased by about 700, larceny/theft by about 1,000, and motor vehicle theft by about 2,000. Crime in the Bakken region has clearly increased since the onset of the oil boom.

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Amy Dalrymple and Katherine Lymn. Bismarck Tribune. *Trafficking in North Dakota is on the rise, and often the victims can't escape*. January 04, 2015. Accessed April 11, 2015.

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## **Native American Poverty**

### **Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota**

Katie Elness

By looking at Lakota economies (past and present), treaties made with the U.S. government, and the factors affecting the social identity of a Native American, stereotypes will be broken and knowledge of reservation and reasons behind poverty issues can assist in securing justice for our Native neighbors.

When one mentions “extreme poverty,” images of Africa and Haiti come to mind. Images of hungry children, shoeless playing in the mud, are standard television fare. Few people think of southwestern South Dakota. They should. A flood of images from reservations should immediately come to mind, children running barefoot on unpaved roads, where dogs infested with mange are lying beside houses without doors or indoor plumbing; these are the images one should see. But they do not because of the vast ignorance dominant culture has cast on reservations. This is why Native American poverty is detrimental to the Native identity.

To this day, poverty for Lakota and Dakota peoples is occurring because political leaders have not and do not obey the treaties they created with the Native American people. The American government is one of the most prominent causes of Native American poverty today. The American government sent Natives to live on reservations, patches of land that white Americans thought undesirable and worthless. Once there, the Lakota and Dakota were forgotten by dominant society; out of sight being out of mind. This situation resulted in the reservations of South Dakota becoming some of the poorest counties in the nation. By looking at Lakota economies (past and present), treaties made

with the U.S. government, and the factors affecting the social identity of a Native American, stereotypes will be broken and knowledge of reservation and reasons behind poverty issues can assist in securing justice for our Native neighbors.

To understand the Lakota's current situation one must look at past economic developments among the Sioux nation as a whole. Often forgotten in the literature is the fact that Siouan people have only used money for the past 100 years. Before the treaty period, Siouan peoples lived off the land, hunting in the case of the Lakota, hunting and farming in the case of the Dakotas. This affected their migration patterns and their entire life way; where the food and grass were, there were the tiyospayes of Siouan people. Trading meat and fur soon became an essential form of wealth for Native people and assisted in their assimilation into Euro-American culture. But this integration was fundamentally misunderstood by both sides. For the Dakota, trade is connected with kinship; this trade became tied up in economic transactions with Euro-Americans.

As Mary Whelan wrote, "The exchange of animal pelts for trade merchandise fit comfortably into the Dakota model of how friendly human interactions should be regulated [and Euro-American model of trade] but details of expectations resulted in conflict rather than cooperation."<sup>21</sup> Despite the conflicts, both Native and Euro-Americans thought trade was beneficial. As the buffalo and beaver populations began to die out, an effect of Euro-American settlement, Native welfare and trade started to plummet as well. The United States government attempted to put a stop to this by changing the focus from trading to agriculture. Suddenly, Natives were expected to change their entire lifestyle. They were used to traveling, following buffalo herds, and hunting and gathering. Now they were forced, to settle on land, live in square homes, and care for and farm their designated plot of land. This was very unnatural and foreign to the Lakota and Dakota, but that did not affect the U.S. government's treaties requiring them to become agricultural producers.

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<sup>21</sup> Mary K. Whelan, *Dakota Indian Economics and the Nineteenth-Century Fur Trade* (Duke University Press, 1993), 5.

From the beginning, treaties have played a key role in how Euro-Americans and Native people interacted and decided how to live with one another. Treaties often were political moves made by powerful Euro-American people, but for Native Americans it was essential to the well-being of their nation. One treaty that did this was the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Despite its portrayal as the first treaty guaranteeing Siouan people their native land, it was not. The Northwest Ordinance Treaty of 1787 was similar to the Treaty of Fort Laramie for allowing Indians the right to their own land, or territory. But later, in 1887, the Dawes Severalty Act was passed allowing for Native land to be divided into allotments and sold to Native Americans and the remaining “surplus” land sold to non-Natives. Even then the government still controlled the land, holding it in a trust for the first twenty years an Indian owned it. Natives did not have the opportunity to become responsible for the land they were living on, and could not even attempt to own anything because they do not have land as collateral for any future purchases. This all makes sense when the actual intent of the Dawes Act, created by the American government, is understood. “The intent of the Dawes Act is to dissolve tribal lands and tribal leadership, and assimilate Indian families.”<sup>22</sup> Initially, the first two treaties looked very beneficial to Native people because of its protection of land for Siouan people. The only thing that the treaties ended up doing was put Native’s rightful land in the hands of White Euro-American people, who did not have any understanding for the Lakota way of life. This is especially true upon the discovery of gold on the western half of South Dakota.

In 1874, Americans discovered gold in the Black Hills and the Fort Laramie Treaty promised rights to that land suddenly blew away like the winds over the Northern Plains. To this day, the Lakota people are fighting for their right to the Black Hills. While the United States government has offered payment for the unlawful siege of their land, it still is not enough. This is seen in the United States vs. Sioux Nation court case. The fight against the United States began for Native people in 1920. The Court of Claims dismissed the initial suit, and the Sioux “reasserted” their suit in 1942, which had a different

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<sup>22</sup> Native Voices: Native Peoples’ Concept of Health and Illness accessed November 23, 2014, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/373.html>.

argument but the same outcome. It was not until 1980, when the suit was brought to the Supreme Court, where it was ruled that “the government had indeed acted in bad faith in taking the Black Hills and that the Sioux were entitled to \$17.1 million in damages, plus interest from 1877.”<sup>23</sup> Leaders of the Sioux nation rejected the payment because it paled in comparison to the value of gold taken out of the Black Hills. It should be clear that ownership of the land and its profits from the sale of gold outweigh any sort of reparation that the United States Government is willing to give. While the amount of money the Lakota would receive continues to increase, “The large majority of Lakota’s continue to believe that accepting the money would be the same as endorsing the legitimacy of the government’s original taking of the Hills.”<sup>24</sup>

While specific events and treaties explain the Lakota’s loss of land and resources, there are still other issues at work. One of these issues is the persistent inequality; another is racism by American people. After looking at the treaties that affected the Lakota, it is important to note the social inequalities that keep Native people at arm’s length from equality, acceptance, and consideration of the American culture. Several different factors go into what has created the massive gap between “white” economy and reservation economy/poverty. One scholar who has looked at this issue is Kathleen Pickering. She argues, “Social identities draw on forms of difference, such as race, gender, and class, which are crucial to understanding who has access to economic resources and opportunities...”<sup>25</sup>

Pickering claims that gender is a major reason behind social inequality and poverty of Native people today. Another scholar, who raises an important point, is Emily Kane. She asks “Is gender inequality viewed as the outgrowth of natural differences between men and women, or as a function of

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23 Encyclopedia of the Great Plains, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, last modified 2011, <http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.law.050>

24 Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas and the Black Hills: The Struggle for Sacred Ground* (New York: Penguin Group, 2010), 188.

25 Kathleen Ann Pickering, *Lakota Culture, World Economy*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 77.

social causes, including socialization into gender roles or structural barriers like discrimination?”<sup>26</sup>

Observation, by Euro-Americans, of Siouan culture has led to a misconstrued idea of the significant role that Native women play. “Early recorders of history and culture have either misinterpreted Native American women or neglected them.”<sup>27</sup> Men are warriors and provide for families, but it is the Lakota women that gather food, tan hides, prepare and cook food for family and visitors, make clothing with hides, and a plethora of other examples. The United States Governments insistence on farming and agriculture was detrimental to the role of women in Lakota tribes, as it had always been *their* job to do gathering and tending to the land around them (farming and agriculture). With the American Governments promotion of the native agricultural movement, Lakota women began to lose their traditional identity and had to find other ways to provide. “Women tend to have more skills and opportunities for micro-enterprise and household production, moving fairly easily between formal and informal sectors of production...babysitting, beading, quilting, sewing, [etc.]”<sup>28</sup>

Micro-enterprising is an important way that women continue to have a voice within Lakota culture. This allows for temporary stability in income for Lakota families during times when Native crafts are still considered most profitable. One issue that hinders female micro-enterprises is a lack of education when it comes to marketing skills. It is difficult for women to get outside of reservation boundaries and sell their unique crafts, but finding a way to capitalize on this would make for a more consistent income for women and families. The ability to sell their goods off the reservation would also give Lakota women more of a profit than only selling within reservation boundaries like they do today.

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26 Emily W. Kane, Racial and Ethnic Variations in Gender-Related Attitudes, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223451>

27 Carolyn Reyer and Beatrice Medicine and Debra Lynn White Plume, Cante Ohitika Win (Brave-Hearted Women): Images of Lakota Women from the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1185568>.

28 Kathleen Ann Pickering, *Lakota Culture, World Economy*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 81.

These simple issues dealing with micro-enterprising are only part of the larger issue that Native women and women of all races face when trying to find their way in the today's economy.

Native women are also exposed to an increased rate of domestic violence. "Native American victims of domestic violence face a particularly bleak situation. The numerous obstacles confronting Native American Women—specifically those seeking restraining orders against or criminal prosecutions of their abusers— are frequently overlooked and unreported"<sup>29</sup> Being in an abusive relationship effects not just the victim, but several different areas of her life. If there are children involved, this toxic relationship has a substantial effect on their mental health and well-being. Economic freedom can also be a factor that is affected by an abusive relationship. If women are involved with a person who is highly controlling the chances that they have financial resources of their own is highly unlikely. Not only are these women already living in extreme poverty, but their access to quality healthcare is extremely low, meaning that these relationships put their lives at risk. Women of all races who are in abusive relationships are living a life that can change in the blink of an eye, but because Native American women are already living in poverty, domestic violence only adds another layer of oppression to the extreme poverty that they are living in today.

Race is another social identifier that Pickering discusses in her book. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines race as "a people having a common language, culture, and body of traditions."<sup>30</sup> By this definition, not all Native Americans are of the same race. Each tribe speaks its own language and the culture is different, and while some of the traditions are similar, they are not the same. Pickering recognizes this even within a singular tribe. This is seen as she discusses "full-blood" (traditionalist) and "mixed-blood" (progressivist) Indians. She found that a person's culture is what determines if they are

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29 [Honoring Sovereignty: Aiding Tribal Efforts to Protect Native American Women from Domestic Violence](#) Rebecca A. Hart and M. Alexander Lowther *California Law Review* Vol. 96, No. 1 (Feb., 2008) , pp. 185-233 Published by: California Law Review, Inc. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20439173>

30 Merriam-Webster: An Encyclopedia Britannica Company accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/race>.

considered full or mixed bloods, not their blood line. The stereotypes she identifies are that full-bloods are characterized as “economically ‘isolated’ impediments to economic development but [are] culturally ‘authentic’” and mixed-bloods are “economically ‘modern’ but culturally diminished or compromised.”<sup>31</sup> Lakota people feel that even the differences within their own tribe, such as these, causes for discrimination on their reservations. Even though those thoughts float through the minds of some tribal members the majority are seeing that a pan-Indian identity is what unites not only those on Pine Ridge but that of all Natives in the United States today.

The massacre at Wounded Knee (1890) is a turning point in history for the Native American people. Because of this massacre, non-Lakota Indians did not affiliate themselves with the Lakota, at all. Non-Lakotas were their own entity; they did not want their tribe to come to mind when the Wounded Knee Massacre was brought up. It was not until *all* Native rights and lands are being taken away that other tribes began to identify with the Lakota people and the Pan-Indian identity began to form. The Oxford dictionary defines Pan-Indian as “relating to a cultural movement or religious practice participated in by many or all American Indian peoples.”<sup>32</sup> This form of identity swept the nation when the second Wounded Knee happened in the 1970s. By using media in trying to impeach their tribal leader, Dick Wilson, Lakota people’s voices of injustice reached all corners of the nation. Native Americans from all over the country travelled to Wounded Knee to fight against this dictator. From then on a pan-Indian identity has been on the rise. Traditions, like the Ghost Dance and sweats, are shared, and connections are made throughout several tribes; they consider themselves brothers and sisters under the name “American Indians” or “Native Americans.”

Even after this massive community of Natives was created discrimination against them did not stop. The United States government and early Euro-Americans have been doing this since Christopher

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31 Kathleen Ann Pickering, *Lakota Culture, World Economy*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 82.

32 Oxford Dictionaries: Language Matters, accessed December 13, 2014, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/pan-Indian>

Columbus “discovered” the new world. The state of South Dakota and the United States is still, to this day, especially neglectful of those people living on Pine Ridge. When Christopher Columbus first arrived on the New World’s soil, and stumbled upon its indigenous people, conquering of the land and those people began to take place. “The indigenous people of what became the United States were nearly wiped out through war, starvation, disease and U.S. policies that many call genocidal.”<sup>33</sup> These issues are still being seen today.

Unemployment is a major issue for Lakota people living on Pine Ridge. This stems from awful, underdeveloped school systems, starting with boarding schools. The education system continues to be inefficient and is the main reason for poorly educated, unfit Native workers in today’s society. With an average yearly income of \$2,600-3,500/year, and an unemployment rate of 97%<sup>34</sup> it is not hard to believe that Pine Ridge Reservation is located in America’s poorest county. When these statistics are compared to those of an “average” South Dakota Resident it is an embarrassment as a state and a nation. The average South Dakota resident receives an income of \$49,091/year and only 13.8% of the population of South Dakota lives under the Federal Poverty Level.<sup>35</sup>

Another issue is the governmental neglect of health and healthcare. The American government does not prioritize Native healthcare, and it is not readily available to reservation residents. Medical facilities are either located miles away from less populated areas or they are lacking in quality staff and equipment. Because of this people living in Pine Ridge see dramatically higher rates for illness’ that would otherwise be under control. The number of people living with diabetes, tuberculosis and heart disease on Pine Ridge are astoundingly high. “The rate of diabetes [and tuberculosis] on the Reservation

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33 Native Americans’ Future: Do U.S. Policies Block Opportunities for Progress? (Congressional Quarterly INC., 1996), 610.

34 American Indian Humanitarian Foundation, Pine Ridge Statistics, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.4aihf.org/id40.html>.

35 United States Census Bureau, South Dakota, last modified July 08, 2014, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/46000.html>.

is reported to be 8% higher than the U.S. national average.”<sup>36</sup> Heart disease is twice the national average.<sup>37</sup> Because of these conditions, Shannon County, the county Pine Ridge is located, sees a life expectancy rate of forty-eight for men, and fifty-two for women.<sup>38</sup> That is comparable to war-torn areas in varying parts of Africa and the Middle East. Not only is the United States discriminating against the Lakota, it is neglecting its treaty obligations to them. This is detrimental to their community and the Native American identity as a whole; as Mary Crow Dog noted: "The life of an Indian is not held in great value in the State of South Dakota.”<sup>39</sup>

The value that South Dakota and the United States place on American Indians’ lives is dismal at best. There is vast evidence that can be seen in past and present society to prove this to be true. What Pickering demonstrates in her book, and should be obvious its readers, is that it is not that Native Americans are not trying to get out of poverty... it is that they physically cannot get out of it because of the oppression that the United States government has been inflicting upon them since the time America was named. “The last chapter in any successful genocide is when the oppressor can remove their hands and say ‘what are they doing to themselves? They are killing themselves’ while we watch them die.”<sup>40</sup> This country, the land of the free and the home of the brave, removed its hands from the reservations long ago. Nevertheless, to this day we see that Native Americans are living in conditions comparable to those in Africa and Haiti. In a country where anyone, no matter what color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, you name it, should be flourishing Native people are fading into the shadows without anyone batting an eye.

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36 American Indian Humanitarian Foundation, Pine Ridge Statistics, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.4aihf.org/id40.html>.

37 American Indian Humanitarian Foundation, Pine Ridge Statistics, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.4aihf.org/id40.html>.

38 American Indian Humanitarian Foundation, Pine Ridge Statistics, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.4aihf.org/id40.html>.

39 Mary Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes, *Lakota Woman* (New York: Grove Press, 1990), 25.

40 Aaron Huey, *America’s Native Prisoners of War*, last modified September 2010, [http://www.ted.com/talks/aaron\\_huey#t-10785](http://www.ted.com/talks/aaron_huey#t-10785)

There is no feasible way to live as a sovereign nation if you are fighting for life's necessities every morning when you wake up, as Native Americans do. People are constantly donating time and money into bettering communities that are thousands of miles away from where they live, and yet they ignore the issues occurring right in their backyard that are identical to those of the countries they are donating to. It is not until awareness of the injustices done to the Native Americans is raised, that an end will be put to Native American poverty and inequality. Native people must make it their priority that their voices are heard to ensure an end to the cycle of children being born as prisoners to a war that should have ended years and years ago.

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## Where Myth Meets the West

### The James Brothers Escape Through Dakota

Wayne Fanebust

The improbable—or maybe the inevitable—happened at the botched bank robbery in Northfield, Minnesota, on September 7, 1876; the heretofore invincible James and Younger gang from Missouri, was attacked, badly shot up and chased out of town. But not before two gang members were killed by citizens on the main street of Northfield. The rest escaped, pursued by a posse of angry men, determined to make the outlaws face justice. Near Mankato, Frank and Jesse James split with the Younger brothers, leaving their friends to fend for themselves. Not long after, Cole, Bob and Jim Younger, all badly wounded were taken into custody, leaving only the James boys on the loose. From the time they set out across the Minnesota prairie until they reached Missouri, Frank and Jesse were the subjects of one of the greatest manhunts in American history.

On their way home they not only evaded capture by hundreds of armed men, they became legends of the American West. Jesse and Frank James rambled over open prairie, through woodlands, over hills and through ravines, crossing creeks and rivers, living off their wits and luck. Their success was remarkable considering they were strangers in a strange land, and Frank was wounded but able to walk and ride a horse. Along the way the brothers accomplished more than simply outwitting the law; they crossed the line that separates history from myth.

Making headlines as they progressed, and known only as the Northfield bank robbers, Frank and Jesse James toured Dakota Territory as fugitives from justice. When it was learned that the two men had crossed the border from Minnesota to Dakota Territory, a Yankton newspaper reported that the Minnesota posse turned the Northfield outlaws over to Dakota authorities, and then went home.

The telegraph spread the word throughout Dakota and the nation. Railroads were alerted and a reward was offered. The excitement was contagious, drawing out men whose mundane lives were suddenly overtaken by the thrill of the chase and the chance for reward and a small niche in history.

So much has been written, much of it praiseworthy, about the outlaw exploits of the James boys. There are books by the score and many motion pictures, all of which chart the careers of the Missouri-born brothers following their service in the Civil War on the side of the South. Most books provide considerable detail about the shootout in Northfield, and other crimes, but gun-toting saturation notwithstanding, the writers say very little about the James brothers incredible escape through Dakota.

Still their brief presence in southeastern Dakota was enough to make lasting memories and in 1924, a reporter for the *Argus-Leader* took up the trail and in a series of articles, he reprinted in detail, their great escape. Touring Minnehaha and Lincoln County, the journalist found a number of people who had first-hand knowledge of contacts with the brothers, or they could recall what their parents or others had told them.

When the brothers crossed into Dakota Territory, they were mounted on a pair of grey horses they stole from a Minnesota pasture, the owner just then being absent. With a Luverne

posse, augmented by another from Worthington, hot on their trail, the brothers entered Dakota Territory near the village of Valley Springs. What may have been their first stop was at the homestead of Andrew Nelson, four miles west of Valley Springs. The Nelsons were Swedish immigrants, having come to Dakota in 1872. Their sod-hut homestead was near the Worthington to Sioux Falls stage trail, close to where U. S. Highway 16 was later located.

Toward evening, the tired and hungry, well-dressed strangers stopped at the Nelson home and asked for some water. Thirteen year old Nels Nelson joined his father and the strangers around a smudge pot used for protection from swarms of mosquitoes. The Nelson's knew nothing about the bank robbery so they had no reason to be suspicious or afraid. Jesse was offered a clean pail to drink from, but he said he preferred drinking out of a pail used by a horse as opposed to one used by some of the men knew.

They asked about roads and fords while causally talking to the farmer and his son who were only too pleased to be of help. Later that night, when the Nelsons were asleep, Jesse and Frank came back to their place, and exchanged their tired grey horses for two black mares belonging to the Nelsons. They rode off in the dark and soon discovered that one horse was totally blind, while the other had one good eye. Two colts tagged along and were found tied to a tree a short distance away. The worn out grays, stolen in Minnesota, were also found, having been abandoned by the bandits.

The time sequence is a little hazy, but the fleeing desperadoes came upon the dramatic rock formations along Split Rock River, that people in the area called the Palisades and Devil's Gulch. A Sioux City newspaper reported that the brothers crossed the Split Rock River near Patten's mill, a prominent feature of the Palisades. They went west toward the Big Sioux, then

turned back and re-crossed the Split Rock River, after which they followed it along the east bank.

It is near the Split Rock River that myth overtakes fact and memory takes a wild ride. Before, or possibly after the outlaws were at the Nelson place they had a date with destiny. At some point in time, it was told by someone, that Jesse James jumped across a wide and deadly chasm in the rocks near present-day Garretson, while evading pursuers. The chasm was called Devil's Gulch and of course, it still bears that name, even though it was proposed in the 1920's that the name be changed to some more sedate and less devilish.

The earliest reference to the "jump" that this writer has come across is contained in a 1924 article by W. W. Sanders, then an editor of a Garretson newspaper who wrote: "It was across the Devil's Gulch---as the legend has it, that Jesse James jumped." The Garretson article was referenced in a column in the *Argus-Leader* dated May 3, 1924, a part of the series of articles on the great escape. Sanders referred to it as an "incident" in which "Frank James and Dr. Mosher figured prominently," concerning a "jumping off place," at Devil's Gulch. He backed away a bit from the Devil's Gulch claim when he said it "is probably true that Jesse and Frank James had to jump across some chasm there, as there were no bridges of any kind," and they were being hotly pursued.

No one has ever claimed to have been an eye-witness to the legendary leap. And most books about the James brothers mention it in passing or don't mention it at all. But one writer, Carl W. Breihan, gave some credence to the jump. He wrote about a gunfight erupting at the Gulch, and that Frank was wounded in the arm. Then according to Breihan, a reporter said that he saw Jesse jump over a "rocky gorge, a distance of about fifteen feet." Meanwhile, Frank

walked his horse down the nearby “Devil’s Stairway.” Unfortunately, other than saying it was a “reporter,” Breihan did not cite the source of his information.

Devil’s Gulch was also known as “Spirit Canyon.” Both names are appropriate for the gulch and nearby Palisades are endowed by nature with exquisite scenic qualities, all of which inspired stories and legends. There were tales of murders, suicides, unmarked graves and love affairs that ended in tragedy. During the frontier era, the gulch was a place afflicted by the romance of history rather than the fact of history.

It is also an unlikely place to be found on the rolling prairie, known for its oceanic waves of tall grass rather than large rock formations. The rocks seem to have exploded out of the dirt. The distance across the gulch is about fifteen feet, between two jagged ledges of quartzite that straddle a small stream that empties into the Split Rock River. If one takes into account the space between the ledges, the surrounding rocky terrain, along with the fact that Jesse was probably riding an ordinary farm horse, the logical conclusion is that the story of the jump is pure Wild West myth. It is harmless and entertaining, but myth nevertheless. No thoughtful historian would conclude that a man on a horse jumped across Devil’s Gulch.

But they could have had some kind of encounter with the lawmen in that area, because it was said in the *Argus-Leader* of April 19, 1924, that the posse lost their trail “three miles east of the Palisades on the Split Rock River.”

At any rate, were in unfamiliar territory, and the written record indicates that, while they were careful about their travel and encounters, they wanted to get to Missouri as fast as possible. This fact shoots holes in another time-honored yarn about the “Jesse James cave,” in a ledge of quartzite on the west side of the Split Rock River. According to this story, they stayed in

the cave for several days. In 1923, there was a man who was willing to guide people to it, and probably did so as often as he could for as much as he could get. But no one really believed that they hid in a cave, including the journalists who wrote about the chase.

The story about the mysterious jump has long lingered in local lore, and like other strange stories, it acquired a life, and a history, of its own. It has certainly added luster to the reputation of the outlaw, Jesse James, the star of the story. And the misty ambiguity as to the origin of the story makes it all the more intriguing.

There is at least one unusual, modern day thread to the legend. The secretary of the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce received a most curious letter dated March 18, 1948. The letter, from Texan Orvus L. Howk, contained the following inquiry:

“Do you have any place called Devil’s Gulch, a deep canyon north of Sioux Falls? It is near a little town called Garretson, I think.

There is an old man here past 90 years old who says he once jumped across a place when it appeared that canyon walls were about 15 feet apart and a sheer drop below. He says he was in a hurry back in 1876—I wonder if such a place exists. In every respect this old mystery man’s memory seems good.”

The old man referred to by the letter writer was Frank Dalton from Lawton, Oklahoma. He claimed that he was really Jesse James, and that “Frank Dalton” was an alias. The white-haired elderly man, who wanted people to believe that he faked his death in 1882, was nearly six feet tall, ‘square faced with red complexion.” There were several scars on his body that looked like old bullet wounds and rope burns around his neck. Even at a hundred years old, he was said to be a “fine shot.”

By 1948, the legend of Devil’s Gulch was probably well-circulated around the country, and getting access to details about the area would not have been difficult. As such, along with other improbabilities, the “I am the real Jesse James” claim falls flat.

But getting back to 1876 and the actual outlaw brothers, the newspaper record indicates that they made another stop in vicinity of Valley Springs, about six miles southwest of that town. At the Samuelson place, another homestead, they asked for directions to Sioux Falls, then the leading town in the area. They apparently did not tarry long at the Samuelson place, but turned west and “exchanged their jaded horses at a point ten miles due east of Sioux Falls.” The *Argus-Leader* avers that on their way toward Sioux Falls, they also made a stop at Banning’s Mill on the Big Sioux River, in Split Rock Township.

While Sioux Falls was a growing and thriving frontier town in 1876, it did not yet have a railroad, and the telegraph would not arrive until November, but it did have a stagecoach line. This must have been somewhat tempting to the James brothers who made living robbing stagecoaches.

Up to this point, the brothers had survived based on luck and guile; their actual identities were unknown and the newspapers referred to them as the “Northfield bank robbers.” Of course most Dakota newspapers came out only once a week, and in the slow and uncertain process of tracking the outlaw’s progress, reporters were unable to keep up with the outlaws, let alone identify them.

But news of the pursuit created excitement that brought out all the bravos, young and old, and their six-shooters, looking for some of the reward money, and a chance to shed the shackles of drudgery. The man who brought down any member of the celebrated James-Younger gang would most certainly earn a place in history, or at least be toasted in a local saloon.

On September 18, 1876, Sioux Falls was thrown into a state of excitement by the sudden presence of lawmen from Rock and Nobles County, Minnesota. Folks were advised that the two Northfield robbers were headed toward town, presumably going to the Black Hills. It was believed that they would cross the Big Sioux River about ten miles north of Sioux Falls, so a line of men were stationed on the west bank of the river for about fifteen miles.

The fleeing bandits had other plans. They passed through Sioux Falls early in the day. Then on the south edge of town on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, the two men were spotted mounted on gray horses. They were the James brothers, and having rid themselves of the black and blind horses stolen from the Nelsons, they hailed the driver of the Yankton stagecoach. When the stage stopped, the men asked a great many questions, about roads leading west. At some point the driver suspected the two men were the Northfield robbers, and when the stage reached Yankton, word went out and the town was soon in an uproar. The sheriff and hastily gathered posse prepared to gallop off to the west because it was believed the fugitives were bound for the Missouri River.

Later it was learned that the two men the lawmen sought to capture were riding south from Sioux Falls, but not in the direction of Yankton. About ten miles south of the town, in Lincoln County, they confronted a settler, Peter Lommen, and pretending to be lawmen, asked if there was a telegraph in Sioux Falls. He replied in the negative and they went on their way.

On the 20<sup>th</sup>, an anonymous card was received in Yankton from someone in Sioux Falls, dated September 18, 1876. It read: "Two of the Northfield bank robbers have been scouting around in this county for the last twenty-four hours. They have changed horses three times today. They have thus far eluded their pursuers by changing their course every few miles. The

whole country is in arms. The robbers when last seen were about two miles northeast of Valley Springs traveling northwesterly. The presumption is that they will attempt to reach the Missouri River at some point north of Yankton.”

This note is significant because it explains the level of interest in finding the robbers among men in Minnehaha County. And it also expresses the confusion that attended their efforts, while it highlights the success of the James brothers in evading capture. They knew the bandits were out there but despite their dedicated efforts, they could not get their envious hands on them, so James brothers could just as well have been ghost riders.

The *Dakota Herald*, a Yankton newspaper summed it up appropriately: “During the past week, everyone who had a little leisure time, have been out scouring the country for the Northfield bank robbers, two of whom were reported to have been seen in several points in Southern Dakota, but have up to this writing eluded the many officers and citizens in pursuit of them.” Among the citizens in pursuit were lawyer Melvin Grigsby, hotel man Harry Corson, and the always adventuresome, John D. Cameron, all important men from Sioux Falls.

A common element in all the accounts was confusion. It was reported, and later retracted, that the desperadoes shot a Norwegian on the Dakota side of the Big Sioux River, near the Rock River, because he couldn’t speak English. In two separate reports, two riders answering the description of the fugitives were seen north of Swan Lake, in Turner County. Then another man spread the news that the robbers were seen somewhere east of the Yankton Sioux Agency, with 20 Indians in pursuit. They were joined by a group of white men and when they caught up with the riders, it was discovered that they were mere “half-breeds” and not the James brothers.

But in fact, the James brothers never got close to Yankton but rather stayed near the Big Sioux River. And on the afternoon of September 18<sup>th</sup>, the town of Canton in Lincoln County, was “thrown into a wild state of excitement” by the arrival of eight men from Worthington and Luverne, Minnesota, who had pursued the Northfield robbers to the Big Sioux River. At a point where the Split Rock River intersects with the Big Sioux, they lost their track. In Canton, after a brief strategy discussion, three Minnesota men and one from Canton set out to alert settlers to the south along the Big Sioux River, hoping to intercept the outlaws.

Their second stop in Lincoln County was at the log house of Ole Rongstad, about five miles northeast of Canton, in section 20 of Dayton Township. It was on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>, following their encounter with the stagecoach near Sioux Falls, that they asked the Rongstads for food and shelter. They said they were hunters, and the Rongstads, with no knowledge of the robbery or the robbers, were more than willing to feed and shelter them. The James brothers gave Mrs. Rongstad a dollar to leave breakfast on the table in the morning, and then climbed up the stairs to the garret to get some sleep. Later, one of the strangers came back down stairs and asked for some tools to open the window that had been nailed shut. As he climbed back up the steps, Mrs. Rongstad noticed he was carrying a gun.

At daybreak the brothers left the Rongstads’ on foot, carrying their saddles. It was raining as they walked into the Albert Larson place, where farmhands Peter Wahl and Andrew Shulson were preparing for the day’s work. One of outlaws yelled, “get your horses boys and catch some horse thieves.” It was a trick to get them to saddle horses and it worked. The two farm boys faced to the barn with Frank and Jesse walking toward them; Frank seemed a little lame. After the horses were saddle, Jesse drew a gun and informed the boys that they

intended to take the horses. Mounted up they took off with the boys looking rather flabbergasted.

Soon after Rongstad showed up; it seems that he was suspicious of his guests who left his house without taking their horses. Peter Wahl and Rongstad rode off in pursuit of the brothers even though they were unarmed. They caught up with the James boys, and as the outlaws were crossing the Big Sioux River into Iowa, one of them fired a shot that struck Rongstad's horse in the neck, causing him to go back to Canton. Meanwhile, Wahl continued to follow the robbers, but lost them in the hills, on the Iowa side of the river, near the town of Fairview, Dakota Territory.

When Rongstad reached Canton, he sounded the alarm, calling the bold and brave to action. Within a short time the hardware store had sold most of its guns and ammunition to men eager to join the manhunt. The men were looking for two suspects, each about six feet tall, 30 years old, light complexion, wearing long coats that concealed their guns. Well armed, about 25 men rode out of Canton into the wooded hills, against a cold, gray sky, but they could not find their quarry, for all tracks were washed away by the rain. Luck indeed, favored the foolish.

Not everyone, however, gave up the chase. Men from Sioux Falls and Minnesota were still in the hunt and a party from Finlay in Turner County was out and about. To the south, groups from Yankton and Sioux City were poised and ready to intercept the outlaws, confident of success. They had guns but were not armed with the knowledge of the whereabouts of the outlaws, nor were they able to outthink the Missourians.

Their trail was lost and according to most newspaper accounts, once they crossed the river into Iowa, they probably did not re-enter Dakota. The horses belonging to the Nelson's were discovered; the blind one was found on a sandbar in the Big Sioux River, about twelve miles southwest of its home, and the other turned up about eight miles northwest of Canton. The horses stolen from Wahl and Shulson turned up near East Orange, Iowa, where it was presumed that the outlaws exchanged them for fresh mounts.

It is likely that they continued their journey in Iowa, for it was reported and repeated in some books, that they encountered a Dr. Sidney Mosher, east of Sioux City. He was on his way to see a lady with a goiter. The James brothers held him hostage for several hours thinking he was a detective. After they were satisfied Mosher was a doctor, they let him go, taking only his clothes and his horse.

About the same time someone claimed the ubiquitous outlaws were spotted about 20 miles north of Sioux City, riding in an open buggy. Then on September 23, 1876, the engineer of the Dakota Southern Railroad saw two men seven miles west of Sioux City, going north in the direction of Elk Point. Believing them to be the two missing Northfield robbers, he reported the sighting.

That they might have turned and went north seems out of the question, but in their excitement, men sometime see what they want to see. At any rate, this was the last reported sighting of the James brothers in Dakota Territory, and for Dakotans, the chase was over. Not everyone was pleased, however. Someone was quoted in the *Swan Lake Era*: "since the Northfield robbers have excited Dakota soil, excitement has died away and dullness reigns supreme once more."

The Northfield bank robbery, combined with their escape through Dakota, made the James brothers celebrities not only in Dakota Territory, but throughout the land. The public—spurred on by the press—made certain that the James brother’s presence was not far away. Jesse James made headlines when he was killed by Bob Ford in St. Joseph, Missouri, on April 2, 1882. This was followed numerous stories about Jesse faking his death to avoid detection and arrest. Frank became the toast of Missouri after he was acquitted of all charges against him. Jesse was immortalized and Frank was redeemed and lionized, afforded opportunities available only to the honored and celebrated. They had provided so many vicarious pleasures that people couldn’t bear to part with them, so they were elevated to the pantheon of American mythology, along side of such luminaries as Wild Bill Hickok, George Armstrong Custer and Buffalo Bill Cody.

The books began to appear shortly after the death of Jesse. The first in 1882, by Frank Triplet, who must have had most of written and needed only the death of Jesse to make it complete. Of course, most of it is inaccurate, but no one was asking any serious questions and the book sold well.

But the public wanted more and enterprising show men created Jesse James Wild West shows, featuring plots that highlighted their criminal exploits, but had little or nothing to do with fact. The various companies toured America on rail, usually performing in big tents or theaters, to huge crowds of fans. Ticket prices usually ranged between 25 and 50 cents. That melodramas played well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is an indication of the popularity of the revered outlaw and his fellow travelers.

The James brothers experienced what was arguably their greatest and most dangerous adventure in Dakota Territory, so it would make sense to have performance in Sioux Falls. And in March of 1907, “The James Boys,” a drama about the daring exploits of the outlaws was presented at the New Theater. The show featured adventures from the raids of Quantrill to the death of Jesse James and the surrender of Frank James. The newspaper article reminded people, however, that “no doubt there will be exaggerations.”

Of course another word for exaggeration is legend, and great legends formed around those few, fast days in the autumn of 1876, when ordinary men—mingling with the gods—chased two specters through timber and over rolling prairie, always just out of reach.

# From Okoboji to Mankato: Viewing Changes to the Minnesota Borderlands Region through Women's Captivity Narratives

Jessica Ann Helmers

## **Abstract**

This paper compared captivity narratives by Abigail Gardner of the Spirit Lake attacks in 1857 with varying viewpoints recounting the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 by Mary Schwandt, Nancy McClure, Mary Renville, and Sarah Wakefield. These women's accounts recorded white settler and military interactions promoting nineteenth-century ideals of westward U.S. society against traditionalist Dakota society in the Minnesota borderlands region.

In her work on manipulations of cultural imagery, historian Sarah Carter said that in the Anglo American and Canadian Wests "pictures of savage attacks on helpless women and children... [Became] a staple of nineteenth-century popular histories or fiction about the region."<sup>41</sup> Trickling down to a remote corner of the Iowa-Minnesota region, this literary genre came to life for thirteen-year-old Abigail Gardner in March of 1857. All the "terrible tortures and indignities" Gardner "had ever read or heard of being inflicted upon [Indian] captives...arose in horrid vividness" in her mind when the errant Wahpekute-Dakota leader, Inkpaduta, kidnapped her and three others on March 10, 1857.<sup>42</sup> Accounts like Abigail Gardner's captivity recorded the changing status of Indigenous American groups in the Minnesota region between the years 1857 and 1862. This article examined changes in relations between the United States government, white settler colonial project, and Indigenous Dakotas that led to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota as recorded in women's captivity narratives.

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<sup>41</sup> Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 35.

<sup>42</sup> Abigail Gardner Sharp, *History of the Spirit Lake Massacre and Captivity of Miss Abbie Gardner* (Des Moines, IA: Kenyon Printing Company, 1910), 75.

## Women's Captivity Narratives

By comparing the five captivity accounts of Abigail Gardner, Mary Schwandt, Nancy McClure, Mary Renville, and Sarah Wakefield, one can see changes in Minnesotan society between 1857 and 1862. The authenticity of these captivity narratives depended in part upon the circumstances surrounding their publication, including their subject's popularity, whether or not they served as propaganda supporting the U.S. settler colonial project, and how they reinforced or challenged mid-nineteenth century behaviors of the "ideal" white woman.

The publishing histories of these accounts also illustrate the mainstream reading audience's interests from different times of publication. Spanning a thirty-year period of American history, the varying level popularity of these captivity narratives reflected the proliferation of mid-nineteenth century U.S. settler society into the Minnesota region and the differing social attitudes towards women and Native Americans. By the end of that same century, both of these groups represented in captivity narratives had different societal roles and became valued for their contributions to Midwestern history, rather than used solely as mass media imagery for the U.S. settler colonial project.

## Settler Colonialism

Minnesota's example of settler colonialism followed an emerging socio-political trend in the nineteenth century for Anglo colonies. Scholars Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau's collaborative article "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies" describes how vestiges of British colonialism in settler colonies of the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia "experienced the greatest colonial institutional transfer" of this Anglo socio-political tradition and continued its processed after colonial occupation.<sup>43</sup> They discuss the three main aspects of settler colonialism and how they interact with each other:

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<sup>43</sup> Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau, "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies," *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 111, No. 5 (March 2006): 1442-1444.

1. Institutions that regulate commerce and markets are controlled more and more by the settler colonial authority or their privileged intermediaries within the native receiving community, like the fur trade and those it employed in the Minnesota region before the mid-nineteenth century.
2. Level of participation in the dominant political authority's law making. The settler colonial authority would slowly disenfranchise the local power holders, even after initial commercial interest had abated in the area, such as a group's involvement in treaty writing or a constituency's voting rights during territorial and statehood elections for Minnesota.
3. Race and ethnicity, or more specifically, the degree to which all socio-racial groups of a society have equal legal and political rights, would be determined by the new authority's power structure and maintained through its social and legal institutions.<sup>44</sup>

The loss of one component to white settlers' control would consequentially affect the other two for Dakotas living in Minnesota. For example, local policing institutions (e.g. military forts) enforced contracts drawn up by the U.S. legal system and protected the property rights of the white settler colonial authority in the Minnesota region.

Historian Margaret Jacobs describes settler colonialism in Australia and the U.S. as a socio-racial framework which offered Indigenous societies the options of acculturation or removal from their lands recently acquired by an outsider nation-state or colonial authority. Jacobs states that preexisting communities of Indigenous people "were not necessary or desired as laborers" in settler colonies.<sup>45</sup> Thus, with the continued westward expansion of U.S. settler colonialism, white leaders would seek to remove Indigenous Americans from lands that could be made available for purchase by white settlers. In Minnesota, many Dakotas found themselves landless, in poverty, and starving after being relocated to the Minnesota River Valley reservations of the Upper (Yellow Medicine) and Lower (Redwood) agencies under stipulations from the 1851 Traverse des Sioux Treaty. The treaty's stipulations displaced some

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1445-1446.

<sup>45</sup> Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009) 4.

6,000 to 7,000 Dakotas onto two reservations along the Minnesota River, measuring about twenty miles wide by seventy miles long.<sup>46</sup>

### **U.S.-Indigenous Relations History in Iowa and Minnesota**

The United States' military presence changed in the Minnesota region during the early half of the nineteenth century. During the 1840s the U.S. government established military posts in Iowa to help protect Indigenous people living in the newly bordered state "against the encroachments of white settlers on their lands, against exploitation by traders and whiskey-sellers," or attacks by other Indigenous people in the region. However, by the mid-1850s defense of the frontier in Iowa had switched from a protection *of* Indigenous groups from white settlers to protection *from* them.<sup>47</sup>

In July and August of 1851 the U.S. federal government made two treaties at Traverse des Sioux with four major Dakota bands: the Mdewakanton, Wahpekute, Sisseton and Wahpeton. They greatly diminished the expanse of Dakota-owned lands in the territory and created the Upper and Lower Sioux reservations along the Minnesota River, as well as the grievances against the annuities system the treaties put in place. The new area of "unsettled" frontier became one of permanent white settlement, even before Congress formally recognized the treaties in early 1853.<sup>48</sup> Soon after, township settlement promoters and traders rushed in to make claims "before the land was declared open for settlement."<sup>49</sup>

White settlement also expanded into former Dakota lands in the neighboring state of Iowa. Federal officials had declared the state's frontier "quiet" and deemed Fort Dodge ready for closure in

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<sup>46</sup> June Namias, "Editor's Introduction," *Six Weeks in Sioux Tepees: A Narrative of Indian Captivity* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 17.

<sup>47</sup> Sharon Becker, comp., "Formation of the State of Iowa: Frontier Defense in Iowa," *Iowa History Project*, [http://iagenweb.org/history/counties/frontier\\_defense.htm](http://iagenweb.org/history/counties/frontier_defense.htm), (accessed October 6, 2014).

<sup>48</sup> For the full description of which lands were ceded and what areas were designated as reservation lands see Article Two from both Traverse des Sioux treaties: United States, "Treaty with the Sioux - Mdewakanton and Wahpakoota Bands," August 1851, *U.S. Statutes at Large* (Washington, D.C.) 588-590 and United States, "Treaty with the Sioux - Sisseton and Wahpeton Bands," July 1851, *U.S. Statutes at Large* (Washington, D.C.), 591-593.

<sup>49</sup> Lucille M. Kane, "The Sioux Treaties and the Traders," *Minnesota History* 32 no. 2 (June, 1951): 80.

1853. Iowa officials moved resources and men to the newly created Fort Ridgely, which neighbored the Upper Sioux (Yellow Medicine) reservation in Minnesota Territory. By 1857, the Iowa state government had stated that Dakotas “had no rights in Iowa, while the settlers had every reason to expect protection against annoyance or molestation” from them by the U.S. military now stationed at Fort Ridgely in Minnesota.<sup>50</sup>

### **Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857 and Abigail Gardner**

In 1856 a land surveying crew from Red Wing, Minnesota demarcated lands around the Okoboji lakes region, about fifteen miles south of the Iowa-Minnesota border. Beyond the bounds of populated white settlement in the frontier corner of northwest Iowa, the Gardner, Luce, Herriott, Noble, Thatcher, and Marble families built homes near West Lake Okoboji.

The harsh Midwestern winter had proved difficult for both the white settlers and Dakota neighbors. However, an altercation between one of twelve Wahpekute men led by Inkpaduta and white families escalated into the Spirit Lake Massacre in March of 1857. While the reason for the attacks escalating into settler deaths remains largely unspecified, after killing thirty-eight settlers in the West Lake Okoboji settlement, Inkpaduta’s group took Lydia Noble, Elizabeth Thatcher, Margaret Marble, and Abigail Gardner as captives.<sup>51</sup>

All four women’s ages ranged from thirteen (Gardner) to twenty-one (Noble), putting them in the typical age range for Indian captivity. Inkpaduta’s group kept two of the four young women from Spirit Lake alive throughout their flight from U.S. authorities. Elizabeth Thatcher’s death shortly after the Spirit Lake attacks resulted from an illness contracted while on the move into what is now South

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<sup>50</sup> Becker, comp., “Formation of the State of Iowa: Frontier Defense in Iowa.”

<sup>51</sup> The monument at the Gardner Cabin historic site in Arnold’s Park, Iowa lists thirty-eight adults, including Elizabeth Thatcher who died away from the Spirit Lake and Springfield area, and two unnamed children. However, most historians on this topic agree that the number was thirty-eight killed during the actual attacks. Coincidentally, this is the same number as the Dakota executed on December 26, 1862 following the U.S.-Dakota War.

Dakota.<sup>52</sup> By the end of May 1857, a member of Inkpaduta's group killed the "persistently disobedient" twenty-one year old Lydia Noble.<sup>53</sup>

The slow reaction of President James Buchanan, poor provisioning of U.S. soldiers pursuing Inkpaduta, and the Minnesotan winter's severity coalesced to postpone the return of the captives to white settler society. The Minnesota River Valley's Indian agent, Charles E. Flandrau voiced his opinions of this expedition in a letter to Congress. He detailed the "imbecility of a military administration, which clothed and equipped its troops exactly in the same manner for duty in the tropical climate of Florida, and the frigid region of Minnesota." He then stated that these prompted him to "[take] advantage of the invitation" by the Dakota leader, Little Crow, and other "friendly" Dakotas to pursue Inkpaduta and assist with the return of the surviving women from Spirit Lake, Iowa.<sup>54</sup>

On May 6, 1857 the group led by Inkpaduta encountered two visitors from the Yellow Medicine reservation. The Dakota men from Minnesota suggested Gardner's release first to Inkpaduta, but in her autobiography she stated that "they were informed that [she] was not for sale."<sup>55</sup> As negotiations continued, the two men from Yellow Medicine "got the impression that [Lydia Noble] was German; and as is well known, the Sioux have a prejudice against the Teutons. So Mrs. Marble was the favored one."<sup>56</sup> Thus, the men from Spirit Lake and Yellow Medicine agreed that Margaret Marble would be the first captive released from Inkpaduta's band into the hands of friendly Dakotas from the Upper Sioux reservation and returned to white society. Gardner would join her soon after by June 1857.

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<sup>52</sup> Peggy Rodina Larson, "A New Look at the Elusive Inkpaduta," *Minnesota History*, 48 (1982): 31. Nevertheless, Inkpaduta's group killed the nineteen-year-old woman.

<sup>53</sup> Becker, comp., "Formation of the State of Iowa: Frontier Defense in Iowa."

<sup>54</sup> Charles E. Flandrau, "The Ink-pa-du-ta Massacre of 1857," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. III, 401-402. Incidentally, Florida is where one of the Dakota War's captives, Nancy McClure's, father, Lieutenant James McClure, was stationed. Lt. McClure died there in 1837 when Nancy was one-year-old.

<sup>55</sup> Sharp, 188. The two men were named Ma-kpe-ya-ha-ho-ton and Se-ha-ho-ta in Gardner's account.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

While the Spirit Lake attacks were not directly connected with the removal of Dakotas from the Minnesota region, the outbreaks of violence in Spirit Lake and Springfield motivated the U.S. military to reopen Fort Dodge in Iowa, send more men, and direct funding and attention towards places such as Fort Ridgely near the Upper and Lower Sioux reservations. Those reservations' Indian agent, Charles Flandrau's pragmatism in the Spirit Lake attacks and negotiations for the return of Abigail Gardner and Margaret Marble led to an increased U.S. military presence in the Minnesota borderlands. The construction of new forts throughout Minnesota accompanied the recent opening up of former Dakota lands.<sup>57</sup>

### **Narratives from the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862: Mary Schwandt**

A family of recently-arrived immigrants, the Schwandts, arrived at Fort Ridgely, Minnesota at approximately the same time as Dakotas awaited annuity payment disbursements. The teenage daughter, Mary, saw Dakotas living on the Upper and Lower Sioux reservation lands in 1862, dwindled down four years previous from their creation in 1851. An 1858 treaty's stipulations removed a ten-mile land strip north of the Minnesota River, essentially removing lands from Dakotas who had assisted with the rescue of Abigail Gardner and Margaret Marble.

Two weeks before the U.S.-Dakota War began, sixteen-year-old Schwandt left her family's home. While her family did not want to her to go initially, this perhaps saved Schwandt's life. She would be captured but not killed while in the employ of the Reynolds family in Beaver Falls near the Redwood (Lower Sioux) agency at the onset of violence in August of 1862.<sup>58</sup> If she had stayed with her family, she would most likely have died with them. Mary Schwandt later testified at the military trials held for Dakotas accused of civilian crimes during the conflict.

### **Nancy McClure**

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<sup>57</sup> An expansion of this topic is discussed in Willoughby M. Babcock, "Minnesota's Frontier: A Neglected Sector of the Civil War," *Minnesota History*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (June 1963): 274-286.

<sup>58</sup> Frances Roe Kestler, "Background of Mary Schwandt Schmidt," *The Indian Captivity Narrative: A Woman's View* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 391

Nancy McClure's own personal history encapsulates many of the changing elements in Minnesota society during the mid-nineteenth century. McClure was born in 1836 to Lieutenant James McClure, a U.S. soldier stationed at Fort Snelling near St. Paul, Minnesota, and a Sisseton chief's daughter, Winona, which in Dakota means "first born" for females.<sup>59</sup> McClure admits to "[having] a pretty good start in the world for a poor little half-blood."<sup>60</sup> Her choice to describe herself this way shows awareness to her socio-political status as a mixed-race child in the Minnesota borderlands region.

Much too soon, McClure's father died in Florida, one year after her birth. McClure's mother remarried Antoine Renville in 1839. The McClure women then moved to Renville's fur trading post near Lac Qui Parle until her mother's death. By 1850, fourteen-year-old McClure went to live with her Dakota grandmother at Traverse des Sioux near St. Peter, Minnesota, where she continued to attend missionary school and assimilate aspects of white settler society.<sup>61</sup> McClure admitted that she "was always more white than Indian in [her] tastes and sympathies."<sup>62</sup>

As four Dakota bands debated signing the Traverse des Sioux Treaty, on July 11, 1851 visiting artist Frank Blackwell Mayer recorded the Christian wedding service joining McClure and David Faribault, Sr., a widower more than twice McClure's age.<sup>63</sup> McClure married Faribault, Henry Sibley's "longtime friend and trading associate," whom Sibley championed for being "a good man, a fine money-maker [who] would always treat [McClure] well."<sup>64</sup>

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59 Kane, "The Sioux Treaties and the Traders," 71.

60 Nancy McClure, "The Story of Nancy McClure," appearing in Kestler, ed., *The Indian Captivity Narrative*, 403.

61 Ibid., 404-405.

62 Ibid., 404.

63 *With Pen and Pencil on the Frontier in 1851: The Diary and Sketches of Frank Blackwell Mayer*, Bertha L. Heilbron, ed. (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1932), 171.

64 Letter between Return I. Holcombe and Nancy McClure Huggan, April 13, 1894, Nancy McClure Faribault Huggan Papers, Minnesota Historical Society and McClure, "The Story of Nancy McClure," in Kestler, ed., *The Indian Captivity Narrative*, 405. Holcombe was working as a writer for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and doing interviews on behalf of the Minnesota Historical Society's compilation project of narratives from the U.S.-Dakota War. The correspondence between Holcombe and McClure formed the basis of the first published version of her captivity narrative. Again, a nineteenth-century captivity narrative was written by a white male editor and not the captive woman herself, despite

McClure's "duty was with her husband" and she thus relocated several times between 1851 and 1862 throughout Minnesota, following his business routes as a fur trader and Indian agent.<sup>65</sup> They first moved to Shakopee, then Le Sueur, Faribault, and finally to the Lower Sioux (Redwood) Agency along the Minnesota River, where they lived until the outbreak of the U.S.-Dakota War in August 1862.<sup>66</sup>

### **Mary and John Renville**

*A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity* was the first book-length narrative published about the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 without a non-participant editor or co-author. From the time of their marriage up to the outbreak of the U.S.-Dakota War in August 1862, both John and Mary Renville served as teachers at the Hazelwood Missionary School five miles northwest of the Yellow Medicine (Upper Sioux) reservation. As historian Kathryn Derounian-Stodola says in her *War in Words*, this book "provides an unusual perspective because it is written by an Anglo woman and her Dakota husband."<sup>67</sup>

Mary Butler was, in the words of Methodist missionary John Maclean, a "'wise wom[an] from the east...[who has] travelled westward with [her] gifts of culture, grace and love."<sup>68</sup> Yet she married a Dakota man during a period of miscegenation fears and increased westward expansion of the U.S. settler colonial project. In their historical introduction to *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity*, historians Zeman and Derounian-Stodola note that "the dominant society believed a woman who chose to marry an Indian fell quite short of ideal white womanhood."<sup>69</sup> Thus, Mary Butler Renville served as

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McClure being noted by missionary Stephen Riggs' daughter, Martha, as being well-versed in the English language, language, as well as in French and Dakota. See Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, *The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict through the Captivity Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 205.

<sup>65</sup> McClure, 405.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>67</sup> Derounian-Stodola, *The War in Words*, 279-280.

<sup>68</sup> Carter, 6.

<sup>69</sup> "Editor's Introduction," *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity: Dispatches from the Dakota War*. Carrie Reber Zeman and Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 29.

an example of both the rule *and* exception to the ideal of white settler women purported by the U.S. colonial project's mainstream media in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>70</sup>

### **Sarah Wakefield**

Sarah Brown Wakefield also lived among Dakotas before the beginning of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and challenged notions of white womanhood in mid-nineteenth century America with her narrative. Sarah married Dr. John Luman Wakefield near Jordan, Minnesota in September 1856. By 1858 the Wakefields had moved to Shakopee, Minnesota where the husband worked as a doctor.

June Namias states that Wakefield's notoriety as the doctor's wife allowed for the special treatment she received from some Dakotas during her wartime captivity in August-September of 1862. Dr. Wakefield treated wounded Dakotas after a battle between them and Ojibwes from northern Minnesota occurred during summer the same year.<sup>71</sup> While living in Shakopee, Wakefield may have begun her acquaintance with her future captor, Chaska.<sup>72</sup> By the time of her captivity, Wakefield would have known Chaska for eight years. Thus, it would not be unusual for Chaska to apply kinship ties to protect Wakefield and her children during their captivity in August-September of 1862.

However, this action by Chaska would be the main evidence for rumors of romantic relations between the two following the war. These rumors were fueled even more so by Sarah Wakefield's subsequent defense of Chaska at the military trials at Camp Release during the fall of 1862.<sup>73</sup> In the November 1863 preface to her narrative, Wakefield states her desire to "vindicate" herself "as [she] [had] been grievously abused by many, who [were] ignorant of the particulars of [her] captivity and release by the Indians."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> This complexity and challenge to the U.S. settler colonial ideal, e.g., their intermarriage, is perhaps why Mary Renville and her husband's voices are often left out of mid-nineteenth century U.S. historical narratives, 40.

<sup>72</sup> Scott W. Berg, *38 Nooses: Lincoln, Little Crow, and the Beginning of the Frontier's End* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2012), 25.

<sup>73</sup> Wakefield, *Six Weeks in Sioux Tepees*, 115.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

## Women's Captivity Narratives as Historical Sources

Using this paper's 1850s and 1860s captivity narratives as historical sources presents certain difficulties for looking at changes in the Minnesota borderlands. Understanding conditions under which their authors wrote them is important to an analysis of these historical records. Male editors and writers produced most of the initial accounts of Dakota captivity published between 1857 and 1863. The threat towards white women by Indigenous peoples' presence in male-composed captivity narratives supported U.S. military actions in the Minnesota region between 1857 and 1862 to protect a growing white settler population. These attitudes towards white women during the mid-nineteenth century color versions white men wrote or edited.

Mary and John Renville first published their account in a small-town newspaper in Wisconsin. The Renvilles' correspondence formed the first installment of their narrative, which came out on Christmas Day 1862, one day before the U.S.'s largest execution in history of "guilty" Dakotas in Mankato, Minnesota. The *Berlin City Courant* in Wisconsin published their last installment of the Renvilles' captivity narrative on April 9, 1863. After the *Berlin City Courant* found out about John's Dakota heritage, they ceased printing the interracial couple's captivity account, and the Renvilles' moved their business to an office in Minneapolis and self-published their narratives remaining chapters.<sup>75</sup>

In 1863, the Atlas Company's Book and Job Printing Office of Minneapolis, Minnesota printed both the Renvilles' and Wakefield's captivity accounts.<sup>76</sup> The Atlas Printing Office merely reprinted what the authors wished to be made public for a small fee. Since the Renvilles' and Wakefield self-published their accounts, male editors did not have control over the content of these particular captivity narratives. Historian Kathryn Derounian-Stodola's analysis in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* suggests that this low level of male involvement with writing or editing accounts of Indian captivity had

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<sup>75</sup> Zeman and Derounian-Stodola, 116.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

a changing effect on how they portrayed white women, Indigenous people, and any violence between them and white settlers.<sup>77</sup>

Frances Kestler points out in her preface to the Abigail Gardner account, Colonel Lorenzo P. Lee “hoped that the publication of the narrative would raise funds for [Gardner’s] future.”<sup>78</sup> As such, some supposition can be inferred by Lee’s secondhand account of the event. His word choices describing the group of Dakotas led by Inkpaduta, and their capturing of the four Okoboji area women, wove in what historian Kathryn Derounian-Stodola called “the evangelical prose of a ‘typical’ white male after hearing the violence enacted upon white women settlers.”<sup>79</sup> For example, in the following passage Lee describes Gardner’s hopelessness upon her capture:

Oh! How full, to bursting, must the tender young heart of Abigail have been that awful night! What marvel were it if she buried her streaming eyes in her hands while she lay sleepless on her comfortless lair and prayed to God! *Leave me not thus alone! O God! Wilt Thou leave me thus alone?*<sup>80</sup>

In Gardner’s own recollection of her capture she remarks that her “tearless acquiescence and willingness to die seemed to fill [Inkpaduta’s Wahpekute band] with wonder, and even admiration, as they thought it a sign of great bravery, a quality they highly [appreciated] but which they did not suppose” their white settler neighbors to have.<sup>81</sup> Her tempered emotion in relating the same sequence of events to a reader illustrates the difference in both men’s and women’s writing of Indian captivity.

Mainstream Anglo American fears of sexual assault towards white women by Indigenous men mentioned in Schwandt’s 1864 version of her captivity failed to be included in any of the later

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<sup>77</sup> Derounian-Stodola, *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives*, xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>78</sup> Kestler, 358.

<sup>79</sup> Derounian-Stodola, *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives*, xxvi.

<sup>80</sup> Lee, “History of the Spirit Lake Massacre,” 363. Italics have been added to the quotation to denote where Lee’s writing switches to what is supposedly Gardner’s voice in his version of her captivity experience.

<sup>81</sup> Sharp, 85.

publications of her accounts. Schwandt's retelling of the "'loathsome attentions' of several Dakota 'fiends,' who 'took me out by force, to an unoccupied tepee...and perpetrated the most horrible and nameless outrages upon my person'" nevertheless made an emotional impact on a white settler audience immediately following the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and their attitudes towards the Dakota community in Minnesota.<sup>82</sup> Whether or not this passage's absence is a result of Schwandt's reluctance to talk about the incidents later in life when the Minnesota Historical Society's 1894 compiled narratives for its project, or if Schwandt's first editor, Charles S. Bryant, alluded to greater mistreatment of Schwandt than actually occurred, is unclear.

When Minnesota is viewed as a borderlands region, the discussion of land dispossession, displacement, and the deculturalization of Dakotas to make room for the U.S.'s expanding settler colonial project alters the tone of state and regional history. While some Dakotas acquired the trades and traditions of emigrating white settlers, outbreaks of violence occurred during the years 1857 and 1862 between neighbors in the Minnesota region because of grievances against the U.S. government and loss of Dakota livelihood. Treaty stipulations slowly opened up the frontier and made former Dakota land claims available for purchase to white settlers. Attitudes between white and Dakota neighbors hardened as the former increased its presence on the latter's lands.

Where literary critique comes into play is in distinguishing where the captivity narrative account ends and fiction begins. Derounian-Stodola notes that for white settlers, tales of Indian captivity "[had] been part of the American psyche" since colonization began in the eastern United States.<sup>83</sup> Gary L. Ebersole's *Captured by Texts: Puritan and Postmodern Images of Captivity* examine how captivity narratives "have been used 'as vehicles for reflection on larger social, religious, and ideological

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<sup>82</sup> "Mary Schwandt Schmidt" in Charles Bryant, and Abel B. Murch, *A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians in Minnesota: Including the Personal Narratives of Many Who Escaped* (Chicago, IL: O.C. Gibbs, 1864), 335-342.

<sup>83</sup> Derounian-Stodola, *The War in Words*, 47.

issues.”<sup>84</sup> Therefore, using the aforementioned captivity narratives of Abigail Gardner, Mary Schwandt, Nancy McClure, Mary and John Renville, and Sarah Wakefield as historical sources to chart socio-political changes in borderlands Minnesota offers a unique, gendered lens for viewing the North Star State’s history.

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<sup>84</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan and Postmodern Images of Captivity* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 5.

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## Settling the West: Overcoming All Odds

Casey Henry

The American West has a colorful history filled with tales of success, riches, and expansion. However, the development of the ever moving frontier did not go unimpeded. Pioneers and settlers had to overcome some of the toughest challenges known to the United States to finally call the west their home.

### Exploration

One of the early challenges to the United States was trying to find the Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. The vast expanse of the west was generally unknown to the white man. The President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, put together a party of seasoned explorers and military men to venture into the unknown and record their findings. Thomas Jefferson specifically requested that a man by the name of Meriwether Lewis personally lead the expedition. He wanted the party to accomplish several tasks. These included ascertaining information about the geography of the region, opening communications with the native populations in hope to establish trade, and seeking the Northwest Passage that would lead to the Pacific Ocean. Lewis also recruited the help of a man named William Clark. History would remember this event as the Lewis and Clark expedition. Lewis and Clark had many difficulties during their travels. They were in the wilderness for a couple of years and had to hunt animals for food, which were sometimes scarce. They also had to deal with sickness from which one man died (Milner).

One of the expedition's greatest challenges was its encounters with the Native peoples living in the West. Some were hostile and quick to violence while others were hospitable and willing to trade. Lewis and Clark probably felt like they were walking on eggshells when dealing with these people. An encounter they had with the Teton Sioux Indians almost led to bloodshed when a misunderstanding due to a language barrier created tensions (Ewers).

Although the danger was high and there were many obstacles in their way, the expedition returned home after two years. They had traversed much of the western wilderness and collected valuable scientific and geographical information. They had survived the West, and even though they had not found a Northwest Passage, they did clear the way for continuing exploration and settlement of the west (Milner).

#### Heading West by Covered Wagon

Beginning in the early 1830's, the white man began heading even farther west in droves. Each person went with different intentions. Some, such as the Mormons, left to escape religious persecution, some went to pursue riches with mining gold and silver, and others went for the rich agriculture environment of the northwest. The trip, starting from the Missouri River along the Oregon Trail, took at least six months if everything went according to plan. The settlers also had to plan to leave at a very specific time of the year to avoid being caught in the middle of the wilderness during winter. Planning the amount of rations to take was a hit or miss ordeal. Most settlers planned on hunting along the way to refresh their inventory of food. Traveling in groups by way of covered wagon was the safest way to travel. With the threat of Indians looming near all the time, strength in number was the pioneers' only refuge (Horseman).

Although attacks from natives were an apparent threat, the environment was a much greater peril to overcome. Much like what Lewis and Clark had to deal with, the settlers faced the constant hazard of running out of food or water. Hunting was a much harder task when there was very little game nearby. Even though they usually brought their own provisions, many people underestimated the supply required. This was especially common if something delayed their estimated date of arrival in the far west. In times of drought, water was hard to come by along the trail. Rivers and ponds from which the pioneers would usually get their water supply would be dried up and gone. This made life hard for some. Sickness was an issue as well. Many people perished due to sicknesses that would be nothing more than an inconvenience in modern society. Especially with the large groups of people traveling together in close proximity, this was a more common incident than with the Lewis and Clark expedition. The people who settled the far west during this time had to overcome many obstacles and survive an arduous journey (Horseman).

### The Republic of Texas

Not only did the people who wanted to start afresh have to worry about attacks from Indians and death from the elements, but the pioneers who flocked to the area known as Texas had to be wary of incursions of an organized Mexican Army. Eventually, the Republic of Texas was born after it fought for independence from the Mexican government (Kraus).

Years before the Republic was formed, Mexico allowed the immigration of American settlers into the region. They were given certain amounts of land based on the use of it. Farmers attained just under two hundred acres while people involved with livestock were allowed over four thousand. Settlers flocked to the fertile area just as they had with the Oregon

Territory. The American population in the region grew exponentially and eventually greatly outnumbered the Mexicans. The Americans knew it would not be long before the area was under the control of the United States one way or another. Eventually, the Mexican government tried to gain better control on the region by increasing repression. They issued an order that banned slavery in Texas; however, it fell on deaf ears. The only option the Mexican officials felt they had left was to send their military to quell these rebellious Texan colonists. This was seen as an invasion to the citizens living there, and they gathered themselves an army. Three thousand Mexican soldiers surrounded the small force of about two hundred Texans in a location known as the Alamo. Every Texan fought to the death and became a heroic martyr to their countrymen. After many encounters, the famous battle of the Alamo became a symbol of freedom to the settlers. They used this new-found inspiration to tip the scales of war in favor of an independent Texas. Eventually, Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836 and became the Republic of Texas. With many political entanglements and after many years of waiting and pleading with the United States Government, Texas was annexed into the nation as a state in 1845. Texans not only had to survive to settle the land of the southwest, they also had to fight for it (Kraus).

#### Indian Relations and Mounting Tension

As the white man pushed farther into the west, they started to encroach on Native populations. At first, most Indian nations welcomed this as it increased their commerce by trading with the trappers and pioneers. However, as the population of whites grew in number, it began to eliminate certain prominent nations from being the middleman of trade between tribes. Suddenly, the white man was a nuisance to the Indians because he was hurting their

trade, disrupting their hunting of the buffalo, and providing deadlier weapons to their enemies. One can imagine that this created an immense amount of tension between the two peoples.

In 1862, mounting strain on American and Indian relations came to a head in Minnesota. A small party of Dakota Indians led an attack on white settlers killing five. Many other bands of Dakota men followed their lead and led many consecutive raids on white settlements. An estimated number of about eight hundred settlers were killed. The United States was struggling with its own civil war; however it managed to send in a large number of troops to put down the uprising. Many of the bands of Dakotas surrendered, and thirty-eight were tried and executed by hanging. This is just one major example of the precarious nature of dealing with the natives (Hyde).

Another example of this would be the Battle of Little Big Horn. George Custer was an American officer in charge of the 7th Cavalry Regiment. He had been in many successful battles during the American Civil War, including the final battle with General Lee's troops. He was eventually promoted to Captain and fought in the American Indian Wars. The tribes of the Northern Cheyenne, Lakota, and the Arapahoe Indians gathered near the Little Big Horn River to discuss the encroachment of the white man and the plan to corral them onto reservations. Custer led a little over two hundred men into battle against a much larger enemy force of an estimated two thousand or more warriors. Custer was almost instantly overwhelmed and fled to a ridge to improve his defensive capabilities. When a white soldier was killed, the Indians stripped him of his guns and ammunition. This increased the firepower of the natives and left the remaining soldiers helpless. Eventually, they were overtaken and every man under Custer's command was killed including Custer himself. The battle was a major defeat and was so

decisive that it overshadowed most of Custer's other noteworthy military accomplishments. The Indians were a force not to be underestimated and proved to be a formidable obstacle in the American settlement of the West. These two examples are well known, but there were a myriad of other encounters between the white settlers and the natives that ended in bloodshed for both sides (Graham), (Hyde).

### Commonplace Violence

As the fighting with Indians began to die down, violence between the settlers increased. Poverty and commerce both had a commonplace in the American West during the late 19th century. People began to take advantage of the riches being brought to the area by turning to crime. Most were criminals out of necessity, trying to provide adequate support for themselves and their family. However, some made a career out of it and became legends of folklore in the United States. This was a time where attempted train robberies and stage coach heists were commonplace. These images became a symbolic image of the American outlaw. Shootouts between law enforcement and gangs of hardened criminals were not an uncommon headline in the newspapers of the time. A majority of the settlers in the west carried firearms and other weapons; mostly for protection (McKanna).

Some outlaws became legend over time, especially as the number and complexity of their crimes increased. Men such as Butch Cassidy and the Ketchum Gang were formed by violence. They were known for their heists and being able to avoid the law either by murder or by evasion. They killed many people in their quest for financial superiority, including sheriffs and other law officials. Criminals like this in modern times are looked at as a menace to society. In these days, the public opinion of outlaws varied; however, there was a percentage of the

population that saw them as heroes because of their targets of rich establishments and men. Both sides of the law had to be vigilant for the other was always quick to violence that could easily result in fatalities. When these outlaws were finally caught, they were usually hung by the neck in a public display. This type of execution was to try and deter others from following in the same path (Burton).

The settlers of the West were accustomed to violence and had a different sense of justice than their eastern counterparts. Even though there were sheriffs, people occasionally took justice into their own hands. When police were low in number, sometimes settlers looked to vigilantes or committees of citizens to decide the fate of a suspected criminal. For example, if a man thought his neighbor stole some of his livestock, he might have murdered his neighbor by shooting him. It was also common for vigilantes to hang suspected criminals using a rope and a tree. Sometimes committees of prominent settlers in the area, usually business and land owners were created to be the court system of a town or region. They did not typically function by the ways of the law and usually failed to recognize “innocent until proven guilty” and “beyond a reasonable doubt.” The emotions of these committees ruled above all, and the punishment did not always match the crime. According to a letter from Mrs. Louis Clappe written in 1851, a man was hung hours after being convicted of stealing six hundred dollars. She wrote, "They granted him a respite of *three hours* to prepare for his sudden entrance into eternity." (Russell).

### Homesteading

Often, a new-comer to the west would be called a tenderfoot. The reason for this is because many people traveled by foot through the prairie to either get to a gold rush, or to

claim their land for homesteading. The people who had walked often had very damaged feet by the end of their expedition. After reaching their destination and healing, they would call the new-comers tender-foot for this reason, and it soon meant that they knew little about life on the plains. "The simple tender-foot don't know the ropes, and you bet he's got lots to learn." (Townshend, pg. 2).

These "ropes" are what kept a settler alive and successful on the prairie. Failure to properly learn these survival basics could result in a pioneer's failure to make a life in the West, or even cost them their life. Homesteading was a way the government encouraged citizens to move west and settle the vast emptiness of the plains. Large quantities of farmland were given to settlers for free given they meet certain requirements. These requirements sounded easy enough to accomplish to the ignorant east coast citizen. They were allotted approximately one hundred sixty acres per family or head of household. They were required to live on the land for five years and be able to demonstrate noticeable improvements to the property at the end of this term. This could include farming, ranching, or development of some kind such as the beginning of a town (National Archives).

As simple as this may seem, a modern reader must realize that they did not have modern technology that we take for granted today. They had to plow fields by hand and oxen. This could limit a pioneer from plowing enough fields to bring in a decent crop due to lack of help. They also had to build a shelter to withstand the harsh prairie winters for several years. Trees are not abundant in most of the prairie, so they had to find a way to bring the lumber to the area and construct their house. Lastly, food and water was a scarce commodity as well. If a settler was unlucky and received a plot of land without any natural water sources, then they

had to figure out a way to collect water, not only for consumption, but also for irrigation of their plants. If the settlers were able to find water, they had to worry about food as well. The plains were not an abundant source of game during this time because the large herds of buffalo had mostly been wiped out due to overhunting. Hunting was scarce, and it would take a long time to grow enough crops to be self-sufficient. Being a homesteader was not as easy as it was made out to be (Townshend).

### Dust Bowl and the Great Depression

The 1930's were not a friendly time for people settling the Western plains. The Great Depression hit the United States in 1929 when the stock market crashed and the nation experienced the worst stagflation in the history of the country. Not only was the economy dreadful to the inhabitants of the west, but the environment itself had changed to a state that was dangerous to live in (Babb).

“Black blizzards” was the name given to the massive dust storms that swept through the Midwest during the 1930's. Farmers plowed an incomprehensible amount of land to plant their crops during the roaring 1920's when prices were high and they were making plentiful amounts of money. Understandably, they kept plowing up more and more land to increase their earnings. This eventually proved to be disastrous. When the stock market crashed and prices on crops took a nosedive, farmers could no longer afford to plant as large of fields. The price of crops got so low that it became virtually pointless to plant because they would lose money. Unfortunately, at the same time, a severe drought hit the west, which dried out crops and limited yields. Many farmers decided that the environment and situation was too much to handle and packed up and left. This left thousands of acres of plowed and unplanted land open

to the elements. Other farmers had to foreclose on their land due to the extreme loss of money. This added to the acreage of empty fields. The wind began to pick up the top soil of these fields and make it air-born. This created large dust storms that ravaged the remaining inhabitants of the western plains (Black Blizzard).

Dust was constantly in the air. Western inhabitants soon began dying from a pneumonia type sickness brought on by the constant inhalation of the fine dust particles. When a black blizzard hit, a farmer could easily be lost in the storm and not be able to make it back to his residence. These storms made it very hard to live in the plains, and only the toughest of people were able to survive the dust bowl area (Black Blizzard).

Not only was the dust a major problem to the farmers. Many other hazards existed in this inhospitable environment. The constant bombardment of dust particles against metal objects created a tremendous amount of static electricity. There are reports of people seeing sparks jumping from one electric fence to another. Many were injured when wandering too close to a car or other metal farm implement and being electrocuted. The static shock could become so intense that it would knock a full grown man down or burn him badly (Black Blizzard).

These storms also affected the animals in the region. With the loss of crops and water in the plains, insects such as grasshoppers found their way into human life. The starving bugs ate anything they could get a hold of including the farmers suffering crop. In some places, it became so bad that the grasshoppers would eat the wood right off of the houses or farm tools (Black Blizzard).

## Conclusion

The vast expanse of the West has taken almost two centuries to settle. Many lives were lost trying to gain access to the plentiful resources and opportunities that the west provides. A countless number of obstacles have stood in the way of Americans and their push west. They had to first explore the wild land that they knew little to nothing about. After that, they had to make an arduous trip by covered wagon and survive the several month long journeys with little supplies along the way. Securing territory from other countries was a feat in itself that literally caused a war. Fighting the native inhabitants of the land caused much tension and caused many altercations with the Indians. After surviving the encounters with the Natives, the settlers had to survive the brutality inflicted on each other. Lastly, the farmers of the immense Great Plains had to earn their land from the government through harsh conditions and survive one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States. The forerunners that came before us successfully settled the west and overcame all odds. It is quite amazing what these people had to go through to achieve their dream of true freedom that the west offers. The western frontier no longer exists due to these amazing pioneers, and we must recognize their accomplishments.

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## **The Two George McGovern:**

### **The Rise and Fall of a Prairie Populist, 1956-1980**

Matthew Housiaux

Senator George Stanley McGovern had a complicated political legacy. As a New Deal Democrat in the overwhelmingly Republican South Dakota, he managed to consistently win elections in South Dakota by championing the cause of the state's farmers in Washington. Over time, however, McGovern's appeal with the voters of his home state subsided as he found himself on the wrong side of a series of divisive culture wars. In the 1980 Senate elections, McGovern would suffer a crushing defeat to Republican challenger Jim Abdnor, thus drawing to a close his two-decade career as one of South Dakota's most distinguished statesmen. What accounts for such a spectacular downfall? While it would be easy to attribute McGovern's defeat to the wave of conservatism that swept the United States that year as part of the Reagan landslide, this conclusion leaves many unanswered questions. After all, South Dakota has always been a conservative state. It seems more apt to ask how McGovern changed over the course of his career that would eventually cause South Dakotans to sour on him. Interestingly enough, McGovern's political views remained remarkably consistent during his time in Congress, as evidenced by his solid voting record on agriculture, defense spending and foreign policy. What changed was how he chose to present these views to the public. Although early on McGovern hewed closely agricultural interests of South Dakota, his move into the national spotlight during the 1960s and 1970s as a critic of the Vietnam War and the candidate

of “Acid, Amnesty and Abortion” during the 1972 presidential election put him at odds with the majority of voters in his home state and eventually led to his defeat.

In 1956, McGovern scored his first major electoral victory by unseating two-term incumbent Congressman Harold Lovre. It was a somewhat remarkable win, considering that only four years before Republicans had held all major state offices, all four congressional seats, and a 108-2 supermajority in the state legislature.<sup>85</sup> McGovern, meanwhile, was still a history professor at Dakota Wesleyan. In 1953, he had left Dakota Wesleyan to help rebuild the floundering South Dakota Democratic Party. For three years, he crisscrossed the state, building a new party structure from the ground up and establishing a network of supporters that would give Democratic candidates a tremendous boost in the decades to come. Significantly, much of his time was spent reaching out to Republicans, to whom he made calculated appeals regarding the importance of bipartisanship and reviving two-party competition within the state.<sup>86</sup>

But as historian Jon Lauck has noted, McGovern knew that if the Democrats were to once again make inroads in South Dakota politics, the key would be the farm vote, which had been thrown up for grabs by Eisenhower Administration’s profoundly unpopular agriculture policies. Eisenhower had campaigned in 1952 on a “Golden Promise” of 90 percent of parity for farmers. Once in office, however, the first Republican president since Herbert Hoover readily deferred to the plans of his agriculture secretary, Ezra Taft Benson, to give farmers the “freedom to farm.”<sup>87</sup> By 1956, Eisenhower’s broken promises and Benson’s free market farm program had become serious political liabilities. One pre-election poll showed the Eisenhower-

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<sup>85</sup> Robert Sam Anson, *McGovern: A Biography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 68.

<sup>86</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 72-74.

<sup>87</sup> Jon Lauck, “George S. McGovern and the Farmer: South Dakota Politics, 1953-1962” in *South Dakota History*, 333.

Nixon ticket down 15 points with Midwestern farmers.<sup>88</sup> Another revealed that 55 percent of Wisconsin farmers disapproved of Benson's job performance. The same month as the Wisconsin poll, Harold Lovre joined two Iowa congressman in begging Benson (to no avail) to change course, for fear that "none of us will return to congress next year."<sup>89</sup>

In its own pre-election issue, *Newsweek* declared that "the one big political question this November is whether the farmer is unhappy enough to vote Democratic."<sup>90</sup> South Dakota farmers answered the question by flooding the *Argus Leader* with angry letters to the editor. As one aggrieved reader put it,

We need no statistics to know that President Eisenhower bought the farm votes four years ago with his faithful promise that he and the Republican party would guarantee the farmers 90 per cent parity...and we know that as soon as he was elected (and without the farm votes he would not have been elected) he used all the powers of his office to defeat every effort of Congress to get 90 per cent.<sup>91</sup>

Anger was coupled with a general anxiety about the status of the small family farm, which had been gradually, as *Newsweek* noted, "giving way to bigness and mechanization just as the country store gave way to chain stores and shopping centers."<sup>92</sup> On the campaign trail, McGovern situated himself as a populist, defending South Dakota's farmers against the monied interests of Washington and big agribusiness. He frequently bemoaned the "old cost-price squeeze" that had long been the scourge of the American farmer and cited studies that showed that the farmer's share of the food dollar had declined since the end of World War II. He also never hesitated to remind them of the ravages of the Great Depression, which had devastated

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<sup>88</sup> Associated Press, "Ike-Nixon Ticket is Down 15 Points With Midwest Farmers." *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), Oct. 1956

<sup>89</sup> Lauck, "George S. McGovern," 339.

<sup>90</sup> "Farmers and Farming Now: Prices vs. Peace and Plenty," *Newsweek*, Oct.1956, 33.

<sup>91</sup> Letter to the editor, "Farm Promises," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), Oct.1956.

<sup>92</sup> "Farmers and ," *Newsweek*, 33.

South Dakota as badly, if not worse than any other state, and made the case that government action like the New Deal was necessary to keep the wolves of capitalism at bay.<sup>93</sup> “Such a case,” writes Lauck, “resonated with South Dakota farmers struggling to save their farms from the urban center of American finance and industry.”<sup>94</sup>

McGovern would go on to beat Harold Love by nearly 11,000 votes in the 1956 election, part of a wave of Democratic victories across the farm belt.<sup>95</sup> In 1958, he would win easy re-election over Republican Joe Foss by arguing that the popular former governor “would be just one more vote for Benson and big corporation-style farm advocates.” Once again, the election was decided by the farmers, who, according to one pre-election poll, supported McGovern by an overwhelming 68-32 margin.<sup>96</sup> Not surprisingly, McGovern’s early career in Washington was dominated by agricultural issues. And Ezra Taft-Benson turned out to be a very convenient villain when he needed to score political points with his constituents. “It was almost standard fare for Democratic congressmen from farm states to sharpen their teeth on Mr. Benson,” McGovern would later recall, “We ate a piece of him for breakfast every morning.”<sup>97</sup> In 1957, for example, he attempted to circumvent Benson’s free market pricing strategy by amending the farm bill to fix the price of corn at 90 percent of parity. Although the amendment was voted down, it generated positive press for McGovern back in his home state.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 341-342.

<sup>94</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 353.

<sup>95</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 340.

<sup>96</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 346.

<sup>97</sup> George McGovern, *Grassroots: The Autobiography of George McGovern* (New York: Random House, 1977), 76.

<sup>98</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 343.

While in the House of Representatives, McGovern consciously avoided rocking the boat by throwing himself into the contentious debates over civil rights and labor unionism. To do so, he reasoned, would be to sound like a “madman or a socialist” to his rural constituents.<sup>99</sup> The one area where he exhibited a clear rogue streak was foreign policy. Foreshadowing many of his congressional battles over the Vietnam War, McGovern rankled many committed Cold Warriors in the House with his constant proposals to cut defense expenditures. In 1957, he was one of only 61 House members to vote against an initiative giving President Eisenhower broad powers in the Middle East.<sup>100</sup> But these issues seemed to matter very little in South Dakota. As historian Bruce Miroff put it, “South Dakotans were largely indifferent to [McGovern’s] unconventional stance on foreign policy so long as he provided solid services to his constituents and fought for the interest of farmers.” Republicans would launch several attacks against McGovern for his alleged lack of patriotism--his support of Henry Wallace’s presidential campaign as a college student in 1948, or his advocacy for admitting “Red China” into the United Nations--but few of them stuck.<sup>101</sup> In the meantime, McGovern continued to thwart his opponents on the more immediately pressing issues of agriculture. It seemed as long as he pleased the farmers, the improbable South Dakota Democrat would be on sound political footing.

Despite his evident appeal to South Dakota voters, McGovern’s success had its limits. His career briefly hit a roadblock in 1960 when he challenged the Senate seat of leading state

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<sup>99</sup> Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010), 84.

<sup>100</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 86.

<sup>101</sup> Bruce Miroff, *The Liberal’s Moment: The McGovern Insurgency and the Identity Crisis of the Democratic Party* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 34.

Republican Karl Mundt. It was an uphill battle from the start. McGovern ran an aggressive campaign, once again attempting to link an enormously popular Republican opponent to the policies of Ezra Taft-Benson. “If [Richard] Nixon is elected, with men like Mundt who support him...the family farm is doomed as an institution and corporate agriculture will sweep the country,” he declared at one Washington D.C. fundraiser. Mundt, however, adeptly countered these criticisms by touting his own record on agriculture, including the fact that he had asked Benson to resign as early as 1953.<sup>102</sup> He was also given a boost by a letter of endorsement from none other than legendary FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who extolled the fact that “Communists, both here and abroad, have long felt the heel of Senator Karl Mundt.” McGovern, meanwhile, had for the first (but not the last) time tarnished his reputation for integrity by running what the *Argus Leader* called “the filthiest campaign in South Dakota history”; at issue was a partially unsubstantiated charge that Mundt engaged in conflict of interest on a previous land deal.<sup>103</sup> This, combined with McGovern’s decision to ally himself with Democratic nominee John F. Kennedy, a Catholic and a prominent friend of organized labor, was enough to give Mundt a slight edge in the polls. He would narrowly win the November election.<sup>104</sup>

Left jobless, McGovern would stay in the public eye over the next two years as director of the Kennedy Administration’s Food for Peace program. In 1962, he decided to try again for a Senate seat. This time his opponent was another Republican elder statesman, Francis Case. While early polls showed Case leading McGovern by a comfortable margin (59 percent to 41

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<sup>102</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 347-348.

<sup>103</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 93-94, 98.

<sup>104</sup> Lauck, “George S. McGovern,” 348.

percent), the incumbent succumbed to a heart attack in the middle of the race. The resulting disarray within the state Republican party opened the door for McGovern. No longer hamstrung by Kennedy's Catholicism (the young president's popularity was cresting in the wake of his self-assured handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis), he would squeak by Case's replacement, Joseph Bottum, by 597 votes. Such a narrow victory came with a few caveats. According to Jon Lauck, while most South Dakotans gave McGovern good marks for his previous work as a congressman and his "high personal integrity," they worried about his connections to organized labor and his partisanship. And partisanship was a real sticking point for McGovern's most important supporters: the traditionally Republican farmers who had voted for "the man--not the party."<sup>105</sup> The surest way for McGovern to keep his job was to remain part of the Senate's "silent majority," unless the issue at hand was agriculture.

The decline of George McGovern's political fortunes, like the decline of American liberalism, began in the 1960s with the Vietnam War. The 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy had accelerated the efforts of McGovern and his Democratic colleagues in the House and Senate to "finish the work of New Deal." Under the leadership of new president Lyndon Johnson, Congress unleashed a blizzard of domestic reforms, including two major civil rights bills, numerous anti-poverty initiatives, and bills that created the socialized healthcare programs Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare proved extraordinarily popular in South Dakota.<sup>106</sup> So, too, did the new voluntary wheat program that McGovern helped shepherd through

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<sup>105</sup> Lauck, "George S. McGovern," 350-52.

<sup>106</sup> Lauck, "George S. McGovern," 351-52

congress after the previous one was rejected in a 1963 referendum.<sup>107</sup> In 1964, Democratic popularity reached new heights with Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory over Barry Goldwater in that year's presidential election--during which Johnson became the third (and final) Democrat to receive South Dakota's electoral votes. Examining the results, many pundits assumed that the United States had reached a "liberal consensus."<sup>108</sup>

What the pundits hadn't counted on, however, was the Vietnam War. More than just a military conflict, Vietnam, which officially began with the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, was a major cultural fault line, dividing the United States between affluent and poor, young and old, liberal and conservative, pro and anti-war factions. By the mid-1960s, student demonstrations had sprouted on college campuses across the country. In the meantime, support for Johnson's "Great Society" reforms dwindled as race riots rocked major urban centers like Los Angeles and Detroit, and hippies congregated in New York's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Haight Ashbury neighborhoods.<sup>109</sup> After riding Johnson's coattails to sizeable majorities in 1964, Democrats lost a combined 60 seats in the 1966 and 1968 congressional elections, most of them in the formerly "Solid South" or in traditionally Republican districts that had briefly jumped on the liberal bandwagon.<sup>110</sup>

To his own surprise, McGovern survived the onslaught. The senator later claimed that he only expected to serve one term, and his willingness to speak out against the war in Vietnam despite its widespread popularity in his home state would seem to confirm this. In 1963, before

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<sup>107</sup> Herbert T. Hoover, "Farming Dependency and Depopulation" in *A New South Dakota History* (Sioux Falls, SD: The Center for Western Studies, 2009), 244.

<sup>108</sup> Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 5.

<sup>109</sup> Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 10-16, 185, 194-96, 213.

<sup>110</sup> Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 163-66, 351-354.

the beginning of major American combat operations, he had called on the Kennedy Administration to end its policy of “moral debacle and political defeat” in Southeast Asia from the floor of the U.S. Senate. For a brief period of time following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, he avoided outright dissent, winning approval from South Dakotans by advocating for negotiated settlement to the conflict between North and South Vietnam. But as the war escalated under Johnson, McGovern’s criticism followed suit. By 1967, he was comparing the conflict to the American Revolution, only with Ho Chi Minh playing the part of George Washington to Lyndon Johnson’s King George III. In South Dakota, his approval rating dipped to 47 percent. The chaos of the 1968 Democratic National Convention, which saw fighting between the party’s pro- and anti-war factions break out on the convention floor as police and student demonstrators clashed in the streets of Chicago, caused it to drop even further. McGovern had run an 18-day presidential campaign in the place of the slain Robert Kennedy and publicly defended the students, who were seen by many South Dakotans as undisciplined rabble-rousers.<sup>111</sup>

Despite this, McGovern’s 1968 Senate re-election campaign turned out to be the easiest of his career. It helped, of course, that his opponent, former governor Archie Gubbrud, failed to take a strong stance on Vietnam, effectively neutralizing it as a campaign issue.<sup>112</sup> But once again, agriculture proved the deciding factor. The downward trend in the number of farms and farm income that had convinced South Dakota farmers to pull the lever for McGovern in the late 1950s accelerated in the 1960s. Throughout the decade, the state lost an average of 1,000-1,200 farms per year. One-third of those farmers who remained worked one hundred days or

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<sup>111</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 149-50, 163-64, 213.

<sup>112</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 214-215.

more off the farm to make ends meet.<sup>113</sup> And many of them chose to vent their frustrations on the current agriculture secretary. As he had before with Benson, McGovern picked a fight with Johnson Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman, who, like his predecessor, was abysmally unpopular in South Dakota. In 1966, when Freeman began releasing surpluses to keep farm prices down, McGovern once again took to the floor of the Senate, receiving unanimous approval for a resolution that directed the agriculture secretary to honor the government's previous goal of full parity. Farmers in South Dakota were elated. "We like him," said one, "because he gives Freeman so much hell."<sup>114</sup>

1968 was arguably the last year McGovern could claim widespread support among South Dakotans. After that, as Jon Lauck describes it, "his defense of wheat growers and cattle producers against powerful corporations and his ardent support for New Deal programs would fade from public memory as he became identified with student protesters who mocked the workers and farmers who hoped to enjoy some material success after the sacrifices of World War II and the Great Depression."<sup>115</sup> Indeed, over the next four years, culminating with his ill-fated 1972 bid for the presidency, McGovern would slavishly devote himself to ending the war in Vietnam. It was, as Robert Sam Anson would later describe it, his "Magnificent Obsession"--something he saw in "moral, almost apocalyptic terms."<sup>116</sup> Along the way, he began to lose sight of what had gotten him elected in the first place. In 1970, when it became clear that new President Richard Nixon had not only failed to end the war, but was actually expanding it into Laos and Cambodia, McGovern recruited Oregon Republican Mark Hatfield to co-sponsor an

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<sup>113</sup> Hoover, "Farming dependency and depopulation,"

<sup>114</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 135.

<sup>115</sup> Lauck, "George S. McGovern," 353.

<sup>116</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 93.

anti-war amendment to a military appropriations bill. If passed, it would have halted all major combat operations in Vietnam by the end of the year. McGovern, unfortunately, was unable to muster the support of his Senate colleagues, and the amendment went down in defeat.<sup>117</sup>

In the meantime, the senator was also openly associating with, as one South Dakota newspaper editorialized, all the “flag burners and other assorted long-haired peace creeps” of the anti-war movement. South Dakotans, even those who favored immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, did not look kindly upon their senator’s new political allies. After he made the decision to participate in radical peace activist David Dellinger’s New Mobe in 1969, McGovern’s poll numbers plunged to all-time lows.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, he was drawing the enmity of his fellow Democrats with his efforts to reform the party; hoping to unite everyone around the idea of a more open, diverse and democratic Democratic Party, the McGovern-Fraser Commission instead alienated party regulars who resented rule changes that undercut their power and expanded the role of women, youth and minorities in the delegate-selection process.<sup>119</sup> It was a rather inauspicious start to McGovern’s long-term plan: to somehow bridge the gap between the conservative voters of South Dakota on his right and the radical peace activists on his left to win the presidency in 1972.

The impossibility of such a task was apparent in 1971, when McGovern first announced his candidacy. After sending out letters declaring this intent to some past supporters in South Dakota, the responses that flooded his campaign headquarters were decidedly mixed. Some, mostly from farmers or students, offered encouragement and small contributions or requested

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<sup>117</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 177-78.

<sup>118</sup> Anson, *McGovern*, 170-72.

<sup>119</sup> Miroff, *The Liberals’ Moment*, 19-23.

campaign buttons and brochures. The majority, however, revealed a deep ideological gulf between McGovern and many of his constituents. There were plenty who detested his anti-war stance. "I think you are way out and care nothing about our boys in Vietnam," wrote one.<sup>120</sup> "All I hear from you is peace, and I'm afraid it's peace at any price," said another. "Communism thanks you!" he added, for good measure.<sup>121</sup>

One woman sent McGovern's letter back to him with a number of scornful annotations. To the senator's assertion that the United States had "wandered so far away from its ideals that it has almost lost the way," she retorted, "Only the hippies have time to wander. The rest of us work." To his lament that "guns and butter" inflation was wrecking the economy, she replied, "the Great Society is what did this." To his declaration of concern for "our poor, our neglected sick, our minority citizens with black or brown or red skins, our troubled young people," she countered, "If they have 10 kids and can't feed them that's tough--let them starve. They won't eat on my hard-earned money."<sup>122</sup> Another man simply wished McGovern would quit protesting the war and "spend a little time at your job as Congressman, maybe you could accomplish something to be remembered for."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Floyd Gjernes to McGovern Campaign, Folder "South Dakota," Section "1971-1972 Campaign. Political research, issue papers, speeches, press releases, travel document, schedules, etc." Box "McG Col. 0001B 1972 Campaign," Senator George S. McGovern Collection, Dakota Wesleyan University Archives, McGovern Library, Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell S.Dak.(hereafter cited as McGovern Collection).

<sup>121</sup> Anonymous letter to McGovern Campaign, Folder "South Dakota," Section "1971-1972 Campaign. Political research, issue papers, speeches, press releases, travel document, schedules, etc." Box "McG Col. 0001B 1972 Campaign," McGovern Collection.

<sup>122</sup> Martha Smith to McGovern Campaign, Folder "South Dakota," Section "1971-1972 Campaign. Political research, issue papers, speeches, press releases, travel document, schedules, etc." Box "McG Col. 0001B 1972 Campaign," McGovern Collection..

<sup>123</sup> William Tapper to McGovern Campaign, Folder "South Dakota," Section "1971-1972 Campaign. Political research, issue papers, speeches, press releases, travel document, schedules, etc." Box "McG Col. 0001B 1972 Campaign," McGovern Collection.

Still others offered prescient warnings for what might happen if McGovern did not tread more carefully in the future. One respondent begrudgingly coughed up a \$2 contribution, but not before expressing his aversion to excessive campaign spending--something which would become a serious liability for McGovern during his final two Senate campaigns. "We think people will think more of you," he advised, "if you are not a spendthrift."<sup>124</sup> Another astutely compared McGovern's anti-war campaign with that of Eugene McCarthy in 1968. McCarthy, she said, had "appealed too exclusively to upper class whites" with "higher educational backgrounds." If McGovern was to stand any chance of winning this time around, he couldn't "make this exclusively an elitist intellectual campaign."<sup>125</sup> This, unfortunately, was exactly what the senator did.

The 1972 presidential campaign had several long-term consequences, both for the Democratic Party and for the political career of George McGovern. Long regarded as champions of the working man, Democrats saw the majority of blue-collar voters, their "bread-and-butter" constituency since the Great Depression, bolt the party in 1972 to support Richard Nixon. Their defection was the result of a disagreement with not only McGovern's stance on Vietnam, but also controversial social issues like forced busing and abortion.<sup>126</sup> The same was true in South Dakota, where large numbers of dissatisfied Democrats, calling themselves "Republicrats," began pledging their support for GOP candidates after learning that McGovern had received the

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<sup>124</sup> Chris Jorgensen to McGovern Campaign, Folder "South Dakota," Section "1971-1972 Campaign. Political research, issue papers, speeches, press releases, travel document, schedules, etc." Box "McG Col. 0001B 1972 Campaign," McGovern Collection.

<sup>125</sup> Marilyn W. Truisman to McGovern Campaign, Folder "South Dakota," Section "1971-1972 Campaign. Political research, issue papers, speeches, press releases, travel document, schedules, etc." Box "McG Col. 0001B 1972 Campaign," McGovern Collection..

<sup>126</sup> Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 71-72,135-36.

Democratic nomination.<sup>127</sup> Even South Dakota's Democratic governor Richard Kneip had "a hard time trying to justify the senator's approach to some issues."<sup>128</sup>

Indeed, McGovern's decision to privilege the input of a loose coalition of primarily college-educated feminist, civil rights, gay rights and anti-war activists became a persistent liability when he tried to tailor his message to a mainstream audience. Despite a string of improbable primary victories that allowed him to beat out establishment favorites Edmund Muskie and Hubert Humphrey, he would spend much of the campaign trying to live down the impression held by most Americans that he was a "radical" candidate.<sup>129</sup> This became virtually impossible after the 1972 Democratic National Convention, which, as in 1968, was marred by infighting and disorder. Those who tuned in to the nationally televised event saw what was supposed to be a quick-and-easy nomination process turn into a divisive battle over the party's platform, which was unprecedented in its endorsement of abortion rights, income redistribution and even a "right to be different." When the dust finally settled, McGovern had captured the nomination, but it was, as the *New York Times* later noted, "a disastrous start to the general election campaign."<sup>130</sup>

South Dakota newspapers were quick to weigh in. According to the *Argus Leader*, "McGovern's ideas about which direction this country should take with respect to defense, welfare, taxes and redistribution of income, busing and a host of other questions are liberal and leftist. They do not reflect the mainstream America we have known. They do reflect...a desire

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<sup>127</sup> "Thompson says Demos dissatisfied," *Brookings Register*, July 1972

<sup>128</sup> "GOP said helped by McGovern bid," *Brookings Register*, July 1972.

<sup>129</sup> Miroff, *The Liberals' Moment*, 119-20.

<sup>130</sup> "George McGovern Dies at 90, a liberal trounced but never silenced," *New York Times*. Oct. 2012.

for radical changes within the system.”<sup>131</sup> Unfortunately, very few Americans, or South Dakotans, shared this desire. An ad taken out in the *Argus Leader* in the days before the election provided one indication of the popular sentiment: “President Nixon’s idea of change is orderly--and works. Senator McGovern’s ideas about change can easily prove chaotic--and won’t work.”<sup>132</sup> The consensus was clear: George McGovern represented liberalism gone too far. On November 7, he lost to Nixon in one of the worst landslides in American history. And in a troubling sign for his political future, McGovern failed to win even his home state.<sup>133</sup>

McGovern’s second presidential campaign severely tarnished his image. Where he had once been South Dakota’s “Courageous Prairie Statesman,” as one of his early campaign advertisements claimed, he now became a national symbol of “amnesty, acid and abortion.”<sup>134</sup> Moreover, dirty campaigning by members of both parties had caused many South Dakotans to doubt what had been McGovern’s one indisputable attribute: his personal integrity. One woman writing in to the *Argus Leader* expressed shock at one of McGovern’s alleged “questionable activities,” listed by Republican National Chairman Robert Dole. “The idea [of] McGovern’s forces once bribing an Indian chief to have a vision favorable to McGovern’s 1968 re-election. It makes the Watergate affair look like, well, not so awful at that!”<sup>135</sup> Richard Nixon could not have put it better.

Fortunately for McGovern, Watergate would look much worse when he began campaigning for re-election in 1974. The shocking revelation of a criminal conspiracy that led all

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<sup>131</sup> “Editors study McGovern,” *Brookings Register*, July 1972.

<sup>132</sup> Advertisement, “President Nixon vs. Senator McGovern: (Or, change that will work vs. change that won’t work.)” *Argus Leader*, Nov. 1972.

<sup>133</sup> “McGovern lags in native state,” *New York Times*, Nov. 1972.

<sup>134</sup> Advertisement, “Senator George McGovern...A New and Courageous Prairie Statesman,” *The Brookings Register*, Oct. 1968; “Whither the Three A’s?” *New York Times*, Aug. 1977.

<sup>135</sup> Letter to the editor, “Campaign Practices Shocking,” *Argus Leader*, Oct. 1972

the way to the White House forced President Richard Nixon to resign in April of that year. Nixon's malfeasance made life difficult for congressional Republicans, many of whom were swept out of office by a group of freshmen Democrats, famously known as the "Watergate Babies" (McGovern's campaign manager Gary Hart, who won a Senate seat in Colorado, was one of them).<sup>136</sup> McGovern, meanwhile, faced much stiffer competition in the form of Leo Thorsness: a Vietnam veteran, prisoner of war, Purple-Heart winner, and devout conservative who was perhaps the perfect match for the nation's most renowned anti-war liberal. "If this year's South Dakota Senate race were a movie," declared the *New York Times*, "no casting director could have done better in picking an opponent."<sup>137</sup>

Contrary to what many expected, the race did not end up being a referendum on either Watergate or Vietnam. If it had been, McGovern still would have won. South Dakotans joined the majority of Americans in their anger over Gerald Ford's full pardon of Richard Nixon on September 8, 1974.<sup>138</sup> Their reaction to Ford's plan to offer conditional amnesty to war deserters and draft evaders--a cause adamantly supported by McGovern--was considerably more divided. But Thorsness, to his credit, did not exploit amnesty as a campaign issue, instead calling it a "festering sore that will be there until a decision is made."<sup>139</sup> There was also the fact that, despite Thorsness' insistence that he had not "been chosen by a group of vengeful P.O.W.'s to go after Senator's McGovern's seat," many within his own party remained suspicious of his motives. A letter circulated at the state Republican convention insisted that

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<sup>136</sup> "Demos sweep predicted," *Brookings Register*, *Brookings Register*, Nov. 1974; "Democrats expected to hold their majorities in Congress," *New York Times*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>137</sup> "G.O.P.'s War Hero Candidate Offers McGovern Stiff Race," *New York Times*, Jul. 1974.

<sup>138</sup> "Brookings reacts to Nixon pardon," *Brookings Register*, Sept. 1974.

<sup>139</sup> "Opinions on amnesty vary greatly," *Brookings Register*, Sept. 1974.

Thorsness was “not really a candidate at all, but simply an angry young man fighting a war with another man--a war already resolved...Honestly, it looks like many Republicans will be joining me and electing George McGovern again.”<sup>140</sup>

Thorsness also lacked experience and credibility in the key issue of the election: agriculture. The 1970s marked another troubling chapter in the decline of the American farmer. Given free rein by an urban-minded Congress (by late 1974, only 6 of the 435 members of Congress had “a definite interest” in agriculture, according to historian Herbert T. Hoover), Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz (who served under both Nixon and Ford) successfully implemented a free market farm program that would have earned Ezra Taft-Benson’s seal of approval: he effectively canceled direct payments to farmers and instead insisted that they “will just have to take their lumps when the market prices tumble.” Small farmers were quick to feel “the old cost-price squeeze” again after an Arab oil embargo caused fuel prices to skyrocket; between 1970 and 1974, their cost of production went up by 35 percent. The only things standing in the way of economic disaster in the farm belt were, ironically enough, a major drought that hit the region in the summer of 1974 and a worldwide food shortage that kept commodity prices high.<sup>141</sup> Against this backdrop, it made sense for South Dakota farmers to favor McGovern’s experience and his support of Federal farm programs. But many may have wondered why he had spent so much of his last term opposing the Vietnam War and running for president, rather than focusing on the state’s agricultural needs.

Although McGovern would win by a comfortable margin, the 1974 Senate election also revealed a number of issues that would make him vulnerable to political attack in the years to

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<sup>140</sup> “G.O.P.’s War Hero Candidate,” *New York Times*.

<sup>141</sup> Hoover, “Farming Dependency and Depopulation,” 245-246.

come. One was his prodigious campaign spending, Some reports showed McGovern spending close to \$2 million on the Senate race to Thorsness' \$373,000. Thorsness also hammered his opponent for failing to properly settle his debts from the 1972 presidential campaign--another blow to McGovern's integrity. These criticisms were accompanied by accusations that McGovern was simply catering to the interests of "eastern-type liberals"; that he was "third-ranking in the Senate when it comes to proposing expensive new legislation"; and that Thorsness' opposition to gun control, labor unions and "environmental anarchy"--i.e., the overregulation of farmland by the Environmental Protection Agency to protect soil quality--were closer to the thinking of a majority of South Dakotans.<sup>142</sup>

In addition to what his supporters called Republican "mud-slinging," McGovern also found himself increasingly under attack from right-leaning private citizens and special interest groups both within and without the state.<sup>143</sup> As the election drew closer, advertisements paid for by outside organizations began cropping up in South Dakota newspapers. One that appeared in the *Brookings Register*, courtesy of Citizens for Better Government and Preservation of Freedom (the brainchild of Wyoming rancher Dick Mader), blamed McGovern for everything from inflation (caused by "wild" Democratic spending), to OSHA ("a treacherous invasion of freedom"), to the economic difficulties of farmers and ranchers (caused by the removal of protectionary tariffs, which simply "gave away" business to foreign markets). McGovern, the ad concluded, "thinks we are a nation of cows, prepared to moo contentedly as

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<sup>142</sup> "Thorsness-land use bills," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1974; "Thorsness-following," *Brookings Register*, October , 1974; Tom Brettingen, "S.D. voters have clear-cut choice," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1974

<sup>143</sup> "Thorsness denies mud-slinging," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1974.

we are are milked dry of our freedom...THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH DAKOTA MADE NO MISTAKE WHEN THEY REJECTED HIM TWO YEARS AGO.”<sup>144</sup>

Rapid City resident Stanford Adelstein also embarked on a “noble crusade” to defeat McGovern’s re-election bid. His nationwide fundraising effort secured contributions from several large donors and distributed brochures across the state that accused the senator of being a “menace” to free enterprise.<sup>145</sup> Clearly, these tactics had an effect. In October of 1974, Gerald Ford visited South Dakota to survey the conditions of the state’s farmers and to campaign for Thorsness. His welcoming motorcade in Sioux Falls was, according to the Associated Press, rather “sombre,” except for “an elderly lady trying to tear apart a McGovern banner held by teen-agers outside the Auto Club building.”<sup>146</sup>

McGovern’s final term in the Senate coincided with a number of developments that further drove a wedge between him and the voters of South Dakota. If the early 1970s were, in some respects, simply an extension of the previous decade’s liberalism, the late 1970s saw the nation’s political mood veer sharply to the right. At the same time, a conservative movement that previously belonged to the “lunatic fringe” finally burst into the mainstream. Ambitious activists like Phyllis Schlafly, wealthy donors like Richard Viguerie, single-issue groups like the National Rifle Association and the National Right to Life Committee and new conservative Political Action Committees joined forces in an effort to shatter the New Deal coalition that had dominated American politics since the Great Depression. They found the public very receptive to their efforts. The economic downturn of the mid-1970s fueled a popular backlash

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<sup>144</sup> Advertisement, “The Phony World of George McGovern: A World of Myth and Deceit,” *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1974.

<sup>145</sup> “South Dakota man launches ‘noble crusade’ to unseat McGovern,” *Brookings Register*, Sept. 1974.

<sup>146</sup> “Thorsness wondering: Ford’s visit to aid GOP?” *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1974.

against expensive liberal social programs and the taxes used to fund them.<sup>147</sup> By the end of the decade, South Dakota had joined the wave of tax revolts that was sweeping the nation. Voters proposed numerous amendments that either slashed rates or inhibited the legislature's ability to raise them.<sup>148</sup> "We have a lousy tax system that needs to be changed," wrote one reader of the *Brookings Register*.

It's really something how cleverly over the years laws have been passed so those who pay no tax or little tax at all are able to vote in a tax that somebody else will have to pay....Our congressmen and senators need their pay decreased until they can get this country back in shape again as they are the culprits for the mess we are in today.<sup>149</sup>

A strong desire to return to the "basic values" of a more stable, less cynical, more sensible" age, as one 1980 study of American popular opinion put it, helped galvanize opposition to two major liberal causes: the Equal Rights Amendment, seemingly a lock for constitutional ratification before Phyllis Schlafly launched her highly successful Stop-ERA campaign, and abortion, which had been legalized nationwide with the Supreme Court's decision on *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.<sup>150</sup> Due to his pro-choice stance during the 1972 presidential campaign, McGovern was one of several Democrats targeted by pro-life groups as a "baby-killer" in widely circulated mass mailings.<sup>151</sup>

Finally, a series troubling developments in the Middle East put a dent in the nation's global prestige. In 1979, the takeover of Iran by Islamist revolutionaries resulted in a series of humiliating negotiations between President Jimmy Carter and Iranian officials as he tried to

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<sup>147</sup> Bruce Laurie and Ronald Story, *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000*, 12-20

<sup>148</sup> "Tax revolt seen stirring fewer as election day nears," *Beaver Country Times*, Nov. 1978; "Education board denounces Dakota Proposition," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>149</sup> Letter to the editor, "Lousy tax system," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>150</sup> "New study uncovers old values," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980;

<sup>151</sup> "Two senators ask inquiry on letter assailing their view on abortion," *New York Times*, Aug. 1979.

secure the release of 52 Americans being held hostage by the new regime. Iran's decision to suspend oil sales to the United States also sent the American economy into another tailspin, from which it would not emerge until 1983. Then, to make matters worse, on Christmas Eve, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. After waning for a few years following the Vietnam War, the Cold-War militarism once again invigorated the American public. In 1969, over 50 percent of Americans believed the country was spending too much on national defense. By 1980, this number had reversed itself: over 50 percent thought the country was spending *too little*.<sup>152</sup> Doves like McGovern were becoming an endangered species in the Senate; by 1980, most of the anti-war Democrats who had allied with him in the late 1960s and early 1970s had retired or been voted out of office. Carter's tepid response to the Soviet invasion--a grain embargo--also reinforced the increasingly common perception that Democrats were weak on national defense.<sup>153</sup>

Ironically, Carter's grain embargo did more to hurt American farmers than it did the Soviet Union--something which the farmers would hold against him and many of his fellow Democrats come election day. Agriculture remained in a troubled state at the dawn of the 1980s. Although high export levels had buoyed commodity prices, farmers still had to contend with high fuel costs resulting from the United States' rocky relationship with countries in the Middle East. In South Dakota, the cost-price squeeze continued to force more and more farmers off the land. Another 8500 farms had disappeared from the state over the course of the

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<sup>152</sup> "Military and National Defense." Gallup. Accessed May 2015. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1666/military-national-defense.aspx>.

<sup>153</sup> "Carter's grain embargo hasn't been forgotten," *Lawrence Journal-World*, Jan. 1983.

decade, their former tenants forced to look elsewhere for work.<sup>154</sup> Those farmers who remained were “harvesting only dread and doubt.” as one Associated Press headline put it, as the 1980 national elections approached.<sup>155</sup> As in 1956, pundits predicted that farmers would be a key swing vote in the presidential contest between Carter and Republican Ronald Reagan. In South Dakota, they were clearly ready to swing toward Reagan and away from George McGovern.<sup>156</sup> The senator’s interest in agriculture had noticeably waned in the previous six years. He had instead come to see himself as a global statesman, jetting around the world to meet with left-wing dictators (Cuba’s Fidel Castro and Panama’s Omar Torrijos) and negotiate arms-reduction treaties with the Soviet Union (SALT II).<sup>157</sup> “I have no quarrel with Mr. McGovern’s desire to end problems with agriculture,” said South Dakota American Agriculture Movement leader Wayne Peterson, “but he has desires in a lot of other areas, too.” Peterson would run an symbolic third-party Senate campaign that year, voicing the concerns of his fellow farmers, whose future remained frighteningly uncertain.<sup>158</sup>

The deck was clearly stacked against McGovern as he began campaigning for re-election. Polls conducted immediately after the June primaries showed him trailing Republican Jim Abdnor, a rancher and four-term Republican Congressman, by 26 points.<sup>159</sup> What followed was the most expensive election in South Dakota history up to that point, with total spending

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<sup>154</sup> Hoover, “Farming Dependency and Depopulation,” 246-249.

<sup>155</sup> “Many farmers harvesting only dread and doubt, *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>156</sup> “Reagan retains lead despite others’ visits,” *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>157</sup> “American visitors find Cuba’s ‘new man’ is just folks, *Washington Post*, April 1977, Folder “Cuba Trip April 5-10, 1977,” Section “Personal and political files,” ca. 1946-1989,” Box 3, McGovern Collection; Advertisement, “At taxpayers’ expense,” *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>158</sup> “Farming is debate focus,” *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>159</sup> “McGovern, long a target, finds rewards in taking the offensive,” *New York Times*, Oct. 1980.

exceeding \$3 million.<sup>160</sup> Abdnor launched a highly effective ad campaign, frequently making his opponent seem out-of-touch with the interests of his home state. He slammed McGovern's frequent proposals to cut defense spending; his vote to give away the Panama Canal; his taxpayer-funded trips around the world; his vote for a gas rationing program that "gave advantage to eastern cities and urban areas"; his support of the Equal Rights Amendment, for which South Dakotans had recently rescinded their approval; his nutritional report that urged Americans to eat less red meat--an unintentional affront to South Dakota's farmers and cattle ranchers.<sup>161</sup> Abdnor also questioned the value of McGovern's experience in the Senate and his record on agriculture. "[F]or all Mr. McGovern's seniority," he told the Associated Press, "he hasn't been able to reverse the downward slide of farm profits."<sup>162</sup>

Unofficially assisting Abdnor were a multitude of conservative advocacy groups. The National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) was targeting McGovern as part of its million-dollar campaign to oust vulnerable Democratic senators in conservative states. In one of NCPAC's most memorable advertisements, a basketball player dribbled a ball on screen, while an announcer quipped, "Globetrotter is a great name for a basketball team, but it's a terrible name for a senator. While the energy crisis was brewing, George McGovern was touring Cuba with Fidel Castro...All at taxpayer expense. No wonder he lost touch with South Dakota."<sup>163</sup> The "Retire McGovern Committee," the brainchild of Belle Fourche rancher and

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<sup>160</sup> "McGovern fails in attempt at fourth term as senator," *New York Times*, Nov. 1980.

<sup>161</sup> Advertisement, "South Dakota has always supported a strong America. So has Jim Abdnor," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980; Advertisement, "At taxpayers' expense," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980. Advertisement, "Mr. McGovern you've gone too far!" *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980; Advertisement, "Some politicians make headlines. Jim Abdnor makes progress!" *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>162</sup> "Senate candidates give stands," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>163</sup> "Million-dollar drive aims to oust 5 liberal senators: a million-dollar campaign using a new approach on McGovern," *New York Times*, Mar. 1980.

John Birch Society member Jay Trope, distributed 70,000 brochures that purported to link the senator to the Communist Party.<sup>164</sup> The Target 80 Committee took aim at McGovern's record on gun control, reminding voters to "Remember August 9, 1972" --the day he had cast his vote in favor of Birch Bayh's ban on snub-nosed handguns.<sup>165</sup>

McGovern would later blame his loss to Abdnor on "outside groups" like NCPAC; however, looking at the way events actually played casts some doubt on his reasoning. For one thing, McGovern was able to turn the negative advertising of groups like NCPAC and LAPAC (Life Amendment Political Action Committee) to his political advantage. Even many conservative South Dakotans came to resent this invasion of their state by the "outside extremists." So did Abdnor. He eventually filed a complaint against NCPAC with the Federal Election Commission, just as McGovern was beginning an eleventh-hour surge in the polls.<sup>166</sup> "McGovern, long a target, finds rewards in taking the offensive," reported the *New York Times* on October 20.<sup>167</sup> "A month or two ago he looked beaten," wrote *Times* columnist Anthony Lewis in an op-ed. "Now he is gaining fast, and local experts think he has a real chance of holding onto his Senate seat."<sup>168</sup> Four days later, the senator was confident enough to proclaim that he was in the lead. "If I win November 4," McGovern coolly informed the Associated Press, "there'll be a lot of people in here studying how we did it, because there's no question we were behind."<sup>169</sup>

But confident as he was, McGovern nevertheless continued to campaign like he was in trouble. He was especially prone to lashing out at attacks made against him, rather than taking

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<sup>164</sup> "Group trying to link McGovern, Communists," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>165</sup> Advertisement, "On November 4, 1980, remember August 9, 1972," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>166</sup> NCPAC complaint to be filed, *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>167</sup> "McGovern, long a target, finds rewards in taking the offensive," *New York Times*.

<sup>168</sup> "Abroad at home; backlash in South Dakota?" *New York Times*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>169</sup> "Abdnor says he still ahead..but McGovern says he leads," *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

them in stride. When the “Retire McGovern Committee” branded him a Communist, he accused its members of being clandestine agents of NCPAC.<sup>170</sup> When Abdnor took steps to expel outside conservative groups from the state, McGovern accused him of conspiring with them.<sup>171</sup> Compared with this overheated rhetoric, the central message of Abdnor’s campaign sounded much more reasonable and level-headed: “I just think he (McGovern) is wrong on the issues...Is that a dirty campaign?”<sup>172</sup>

McGovern’s chances of beating Abdnor were slim, but not impossible as the November 4 election drew near. His years of experience were certainly a strength, as was the fact that South Dakotans resented elements of the extreme right invading their state and trying to influence their vote. But South Dakotans could also cite plenty of genuine grievances against their senator--namely that he seemed to have lost interest in the things that concerned them most, particularly agriculture. In all likelihood, a majority of them agreed with Abdnor that McGovern was “wrong on the issues,” and the final vote tallies would have reflected this. What really did in McGovern’s campaign, however, was an incident that took place on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation less than a week before the election. Hoping to mobilize the Native American vote, a representative of the McGovern campaign distributed brochures that encouraged them to vote Democratic and promised free food and a color television set for whichever district showed the highest turnout at the polls. Charges of bribery flew from the highest office of the state. “I do hereby request that you investigate and, if warranted, prosecute those persons who are attempting to buy votes in this election,” Governor Bill

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<sup>170</sup> “Group trying to link McGovern, Communists,” *Brookings Register*

<sup>171</sup> “NCPAC complaint to be filed,” *Brookings Register*.

<sup>172</sup> “Backlash in South Dakota?” *New York Times*.

Janklow wrote to the state attorney general immediately after the news broke. In response, McGovern argued that the giveaways did not technically violate any existing bribery statutes and that the Republican governor was playing “just typical politics as usual.”<sup>173</sup>

But the damage had already been done. McGovern’s reputation for integrity, already diminished by dirty campaigning in previous elections, hit its low ebb. If before he had at least been in contention, now he stood virtually no chance of winning re-election. On November 4, he received one of the worst drubbings of his political career, failing to garner even 40 percent of the vote. The *New York Times* dissected the results the next day. What clinched McGovern’s defeat, the paper noted, was the loss of Minnehaha County and several otherwise Democratic parts of the state over the issue of abortion.<sup>174</sup> The story was the same throughout the country, as a wave of new Republicans were swept into Congress on Ronald Reagan’s coattails. It was the beginning of a new, definitively conservative political era. And while South Dakotans would continue to pull the lever for Democrats in the decades to come, liberals like George McGovern no longer held much appeal.

George McGovern’s exit from the Senate in 1980 did not signal his retreat from the spotlight. He would remain an active public figure until his death in 2012, working to advance the cause of peace and reduce hunger and poverty around the world. He even mounted one last presidential campaign in 1984, bowing out after a surprisingly strong showing the Massachusetts primary. Over time, his rough edges were sanded away by liberal pundits who helped to cultivate what Pat Buchanan derisively called the “legend of St. George.”<sup>175</sup> Upon the

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<sup>173</sup> “Charges fly over Indian ‘bribe’,” *Brookings Register*, Oct. 1980.

<sup>174</sup> “McGovern fails in attempt at fourth term as senator,” *New York Times*.

<sup>175</sup> “The Legend of Saint George McGovern,” *New York Times*, Nov. 1972.

senator's death in 2012, the *New York Times* ran a laudatory obituary, entitled "The Moral Clarity of George McGovern."<sup>176</sup> And to be sure, the Senator's legacy as a principled critic of the Vietnam War remains largely uncontested. But this does not mean there is no room for criticism. By the end of his Senate career, McGovern's primary interests had clearly diverged from those of South Dakota. His earlier work as a champion of the state's farmers gradually took a backseat to his more controversial anti-war activism and support of various other liberal causes, just as the American agricultural sector was on the brink of one of the worst crises in its history. Within the story of McGovern's rise and fall, one sees both the greatest strengths and shortcomings of politicians--how their willingness to take a stand on important issues can change the course of history and how, by growing too comfortable with their life inside the Beltway, they can lose touch with the people they were elected to serve.

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<sup>176</sup> "The Moral Clarity of George McGovern," *New York Times*, Oct. 2012.

## Stained Glass in the American West Re-envisioning an Ancient Art

Dr. Barbara Johnson

In his new book and wildly popular television docu- mini-series, journalist and commentator Bill O'Reilly tells America that there are many legends and lies about the "Real West" that need to be explained and debunked. O'Reilly, a former high school history teacher, explains, "America has a tendency to glamorize its past, creating myths instead of truth." He argues that our image of the west is informed by dime novels, motion pictures and television shows and is that of "John Wayne, Marshall Matt Dillon in *Gunsmoke* and maybe even a squinty, grizzled Clint Eastwood mowing down bad guys in a dusty town" (O'Reilly, P.2).

O'Reilly, who makes almost a fetish of his brand of veracity, and his co-author David Fisher's, interpretation of the American West, is that it was "a place where brutality ruled and life expectancy was measured in months. If you lived to be 40, you were way ahead." The book portrays some Native Americans as "more civilized than others, but boldly proclaims "Indians would "torture in ways that are nearly inconceivable." No mention of white atrocities. Cowboys and Indians. Bad Guys and Good guys. Black and White.



*Wall Drug Entry, Wall, SD*

*Mary Aldrich, artist*

Thankfully, contemporary scholars such as those at this conference are now taking a more comprehensive look at what makes up the American West. Two new scholarly works, *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West* edited by Clyde A. Milner, II and *Before the West was West: Critical Essays on Pre-1800 Literature of the American Frontier* edited by Amy T. Hamilton and Tom J. Hilliard, attempt to further define the parameters of “The West” and what it means. Factors such as geography, aridity, race, national origin, social class, gender, nature and the environment, as well as the role of Native Americans are now being more closely examined. The authors prefer to see “the West” as a mosaic and “a place as varied... and a process as complex as its history that can never be captured in a single definition or paradigm.... It all depends, of course, on where you stand and in whose shoes you are standing.” (Hyde and Deverel. *Reintroducing a Re-envisioned West.* P. 301) In one way, stained glass, composed of thousands of pieces and shards that are held together by a matrix of lead, epoxy or cement, is the perfect metaphor for the American West. Thousands of unique, irregular and rough forms are put together to create a new image that is different than all of its parts, yet a unified whole. By the same token, the subject matter of pictorial and figurative stained glass found in the American West, illustrates these complexities of person and place.



*William Morris and Edward Burne Jones*

Annette Kolodny in her essay *“When the East was West: Vinland in the American Imaginary”* suggests that the notion of the American West developed even before foreign explorers set foot on American shores. She argues that Vikings, as told in the Nordic sagas, were the first to postulate the idea of an American West or Frontier when they explored the eastern Canadian provinces and Massachusetts. These explorations are memorialized in stained glass windows in the Vinland Estate in Newport, Rhode Island. Vinland Estate was built in 1882 for tobacco heiress Catharine Lorillard Wolfe by Peabody & Stearns. The Romanesque Revival style exterior consists of red sandstone with Aesthetic Movement style elements and includes interior design by British Arts and Craft and stained glass artists William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. The home was inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem, *“A Skeleton in Armor”* and is named after the one of the first spots on which the old Norsemen are supposed to have landed on their prehistoric voyage across the ocean. The owner of the estate believed it was the site of an Old Norse stone mill.

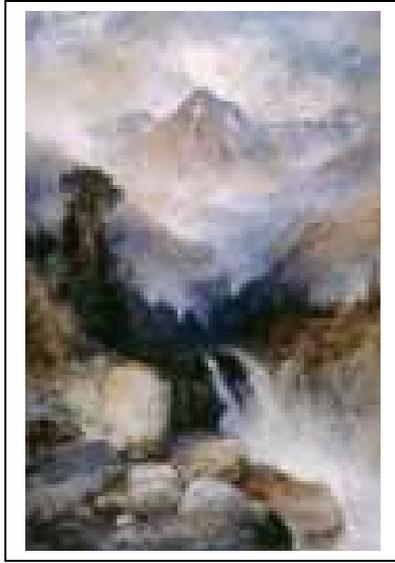


*“The Vinland Adventurers”*

The original stained glass panel included one of a Viking sailing ship as well as Nordic deities Thor, Odin, and Freyr . The images of three important Norse explorers, including Leif Erickson, were also featured. The window was dismantled when the estate was sold and the Viking ship portion is the only one that survives, although the artist's "cartoons" of the other sections are extant.

As the American frontier moved west, so did the stained glass industry. While much of American stained glass was imported from Europe, once the oil and gas fields in western Pennsylvania and Indiana were developed beginning in 1886 companies that manufactured stained glass were able to open up and flourished. These firms, such as the Kokomo Opalescent Glass Company in Kokomo, Indiana, which is still in business today, were the major supplier for stained glass studios including the Tiffany Studios, in New York. With the raw materials at hand and an influx of German immigrant stained glass artisans trying to escape conscription into the army by the German Czar, the industry took off. Hundreds of small studios opened and began supplying stained glass for churches, court houses, schools, residences and even horse barns though out America. While some of the pictorial windows copied European artistic masterpieces, other artists crafted uniquely American images. These images included works that graphically represent the western space and the people who inhabited it.

To the new scholars, what perhaps first comes to mind as some of the key determinants of "The West" is its natural geography and landscape and its aridity- the presence or absence of life sustaining water. Stained glass artists such as Louis Comfort Tiffany in New York incorporated these themes into their work. At Second Presbyterian Church in Chicago,



*Thomas Moran*



*Louis C. Tiffany*

Tiffany created a large window that shows a scene from the the Colorado Rockies that is emblematic of the grand landscapes found there and that are often said to define “The West.” Inspired by an 1890 painting by Thomas Moran, Tiffany used a variety of special stained glass techniques such as plating (bonding together two or more different pieces of colored or textured glass) to create a special effect. He also used different types of American glass such as opalescent, drapery and glass, feather glass, to create the scene. The stained glass shows a fertile and abundant valley with lush vegetation and majestic mountains. Several of the mountains intersect forming a cross like figure where snow accumulates and making it appears that God himself blesses and approves of this Christian Golden landscape symbolized by the praying angels. Tiffany was also apparently influenced by a poem of William Wadsworth Longfellow which eulogizes a deceased lover. The survivor mourns his loss by wearing a white cross on his breast and says:

*There is a mountain in the distant West  
That, sun defying in its deep ravines*

*Displays a cross of snow upon its side  
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast  
There eighteen years through all the changing scenes  
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.*

Water imagery is also especially important in the stained glass of the west in churches where it is associated with baptism and new life, but water images also appear in more secular contexts. At the Riordan Mansion in Flagstaff, Arizona, the raging Colorado River is the primary feature of special windows in the common room of an Arts and Crafts style “Twin Home” that links the shared living quarters of the families of two Chicago brothers who became lumber magnates in the southwest.

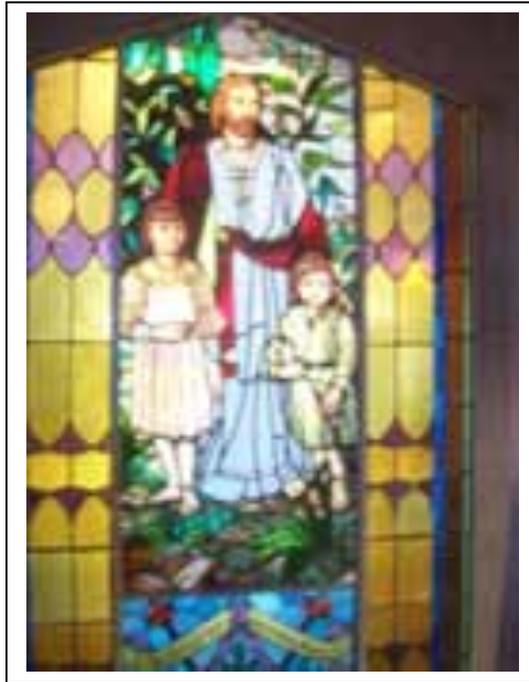


The panels while not “stained glass” composed of many pieces, are actually very large silver negatives taken from photographs taken by John K. Hillers, photographer , who accompanied John Wesley Powell when he explored the Grand Canyon. In the 1904 mansion there are two sets of windows consisting of seven black and white photographs with a translucent frosted

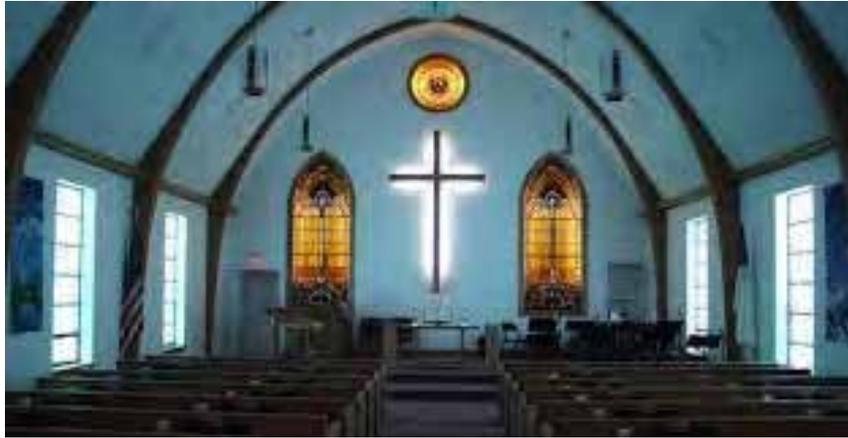
glass background. The photos depict southwest scenic landscapes and the portraits of indigenous Native American chiefs. The windows were originally prepared by binding the photographic transparency in contact with a piece of finely ground glass. They were then coated with a matte varnish, thus creating a photograph on glass. In 1984 the windows were assessed and found to be badly deteriorated. They were faded and cracked with pieces of glass missing. They were also found to be damaged by fungus growth and chemical instability because of 90 years of fluctuating humidity and condensation. It was determined the original panes could not be restored, so they were archived, and the original negatives were located. The images from the negatives were reproduced on modern materials to replicate the exact image, size and wood frames of the original windows. The images were exactly reproduced on a thin sheet of inert plastic and encapsulated between clear and frosted glass panes, thus preserving for many more years the pictures of the raging, life giving waters of the Colorado River and the Native American people who first lived in the area.

The inhabitants of “the West” were often seen as larger than life, their personas as large as the open spaces and it is not unusual to find their images in the stained glass of the American West. For example, in North Platte Nebraska’s Church of our Savior Church, a large window in the Episcopal Church was donated by William “Buffalo Bill” Cody. It shows a Christ figure with two children. The window is dedicated to the memory of the Cody’s two children, Kit Carson Cody and Orma Mae Cody who both died in childhood. The stained glass artists copied family photographs to paint the faces of the children in the stained glass. In a bold, showman like act, the face of Christ appears to be the face of Buffalo Bill Cody himself! The window is uniquely American as the boy is shown holding a rifle just like the young Cody’s namesake Kit Carson,

Buffalo Bill's idol and the namesake of his son. Carson was known for his marksmanship and his ability with guns.



Likewise, another stained glass window in Deadwood, South Dakota has a link to other gun-toting associates of Buffalo Bill. Both Wild Bill Hickok and Martha "Calamity Jane" Canary performed in Buffalo Bill's Wild West and later lived in Deadwood, South Dakota. The pair was well known in this Black Hills Mining Town and when Calamity Jane died, it is said many of her friends from the Wild West Show came to town for her funeral at the Methodist Church. The church was razed in the late 1990's to make room for a city park, and most of the stained glass was moved to the Methodist Church in Lead, South Dakota. One round rose panel, however, was moved to the Visitors Center at Mount Moriah Cemetery where Hickok and Calamity Jane are buried. The window has an apparent bullet hole in its center and local legend holds it was placed there by a distraught Annie Oakley when she attend her friend's final services.



*Lead, SD. Methodist Church*

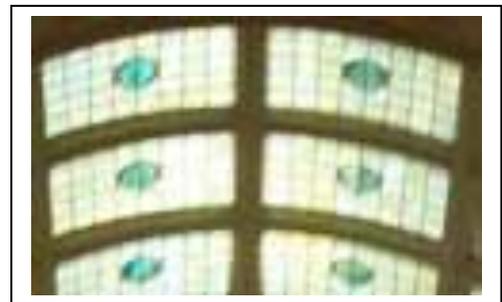


*Barrel Vault, South Dakota State Capitol, Pierre, SD. South Dakota Department of Tourism*

Finally, the Native American presence in “The West” is acknowledged in the newly cleaned and restored stained glass at the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre. Long obscured by dirt and grime, it was impossible to determine, what, if anything was represented by the glass in the

barrel vault that lies over the main, marble Grand Staircase of the building. Once the panels were cleaned and restored and lit by new, powerful LED lights, a major piece of art that appears to be a representation of a Native American Creation story was uncovered.

The barrel vault was originally installed as a sky light over the staircase when the building was constructed in 1910. While the artist and studio that produced the work is not yet known, now that the glass have been cleaned and illuminated, scholars can begin to study and assess it. The skylight consists of 15 panels on each side of the stairwell that contain an image of an erect ear of corn surrounded what appear to be pumpkins and squash. The panels are tied together with a pink ribbon which also appears in many other panels of stained glass in other parts of the capitol. The corn, squash and pumpkins are usually used as symbols in the indigenous culture and represent fertility, abundance and prosperity. The top of the vault consists of 60 square panels, each containing a circle like object. The circle is split into four parts by the leading of the glass. The interior of the circle is blue and a golden yellow rim surrounds it. The quartered circle as a symbol goes back at least to Maya times and adopted by Indian tribes in the south and west as a representation of corn. The 4 sections of the circle illustrate the four key elements of any good life-- fire, water, air and earth.



In Native American folklore told the Creation story was told and passed on in the oral tradition. Different kinds of people were created including the Lakota who were known as the

buffalo people. Others were created as “Corn People” (both Blue and Yellow Corn) and many stories developed and were passed down in this tradition by a plethora of storytellers who often altered the story to fit a special need. Most of the stories involved fertility, abundance and prosperity and are centered on the “Corn Woman” or “Mother Corn” figure. She is always portrayed as an erect, upright ear of corn usually surrounded by squash and pumpkins in indigenous art. In all of the stories, it is Mother Corn who nurtures her people, gives them the kernels to plant in four rows, so that their survival and well-being are insured.

In one of the stories, corn woman is a beautiful maiden with long, golden, silky hair. She has both a lover and a jealous husband. When the husband discovers the lover, he chops up corn woman into the kernels and tosses her into the air. As she descends to earth, however, she cries out to her lover that she is not gone forever, but will fall to the comforting bosom of Mother Earth, sprout, grow and return, more abundant and beautiful than ever.

In another version of the story, Corn Woman is portrayed as an old woman with many hungry children. She gets old and died, frazzled to the bone by all the hard work of caring for her family. When she is about ready to die, she tells her sons to remove her kernels and plant them in four straight rows and she will return to feed them and they will never be hungry.

As scholars continue to deliberate, debate and define just what is the West, it may be helpful to look to stained glass of the region for a clue to its origins and meanings. Stained glass windows found in the churches, courthouses, public buildings and residences, in even the most unusual and obscure places, tell the story of the people and place in all of their glimmering glory.

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**The Sioux Falls Sisters of Cheer:  
Letter Writing and Domestic Ideals on the World War I Home Front**

Carolyn Johnson

On a September day in 1918, the twenty-six year old Vivian Ranney received a letter from a soldier stationed at Camp Dix, New Jersey. The letter began as any correspondence between friends could: "I [received] your letter a few days ago and am sure happy to know that I have you for a friend who will send a word of cheer now and then. If it had not been for you who wrote such lovely letters to me while in the training the life would have been dreary."<sup>177</sup> The surprising aspect of these words is that the letter-writer, Private Fred Lehmkuhl, and Vivian Ranney had never met. Ranney began corresponding with this complete stranger several months earlier, but she was neither being forward nor breaking traditional conventions by writing to an unknown soldier. Rather, Ranney wrote as a member of a Sioux Falls organization called the Sisters of Cheer, which gave women the names of South Dakota soldiers and instructed them to lift the spirits of these soldiers by sending them letters and packages.

Formed in Sioux Falls in 1917, the Sisters of Cheer matched each young woman who applied with a soldier so that she could send him mail while he was serving his country. Over 500 women applied in the ten days after the formation of the Minnehaha County group, and the Sisters of Cheer then expanded throughout South Dakota, providing one example of how

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<sup>177</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, September 1, 1918, Vivian Ranney Raab Papers, Center for Western Studies (CWS), Sioux Falls, SD.

those at home supported those who were serving.<sup>178</sup> The Sisters of Cheer organization offers a glimpse of another way in which the war mobilized entire societies. The Great War was the first conflict in which the term “home front” was used to refer to the variety of ways men, women, and children worked, volunteered, or otherwise served the soldiers and the war effort from home.<sup>179</sup>

These opportunities that accompanied the mobilization of the home front often created tensions between women’s traditional roles and new ways they could help the war effort. For instance, the task of outfitting soldiers with warm knitwear fell largely to women, yet women also assumed new roles such as working in factories. Just as society sent women these sometimes conflicting messages about what they should be doing, the Sisters of Cheer created a dissonance between women’s traditional responsibilities and the new roles that they could play. Namely, the organization gave Sioux Falls women a new way—writing letters to strangers—in which to perform the traditionally feminine responsibility of supporting and uplifting men.

The Sisters of Cheer also challenge the prevailing focus in the literature surrounding women during the Great War and offer scholars an opportunity to broaden our understanding of the myriad roles women played during this time. Dennis Showalter refers to women as “overlooked” in the literature on World War I written before the 1990s,<sup>180</sup> and this notion is apparent when considering a variety of sources. Earlier studies that purport to consider women throughout America’s history tend to gloss over women’s experiences during the Great

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178 “Cheer Sisters Society Filled,” *Sioux Falls Press* (Sioux Falls, SD), August 11, 1917, 6.

179 Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London: Longman, 2002), 3.

180 Dennis Showalter, “The United States in the Great War: A Historiography,” *OAH Magazine of History* 17, no. 1 (October 2002): 5.

War. They often discuss the end of the Victorian era and the flappers and changes of the 1920s, but the First World War, if mentioned at all, appears as the background of a story about suffrage or a sort of dividing point between eras.<sup>181</sup> While scholarship on women in World War I has expanded, it still maintains a limited focus—it primarily concentrates on those women who entered the workforce. However, this emphasis neglects a large portion of American women. Vivian Ranney and the Sisters of Cheer therefore present the opportunity to move scholarship beyond the dominant narrative of women working during the war and instead consider other ways the war affected the lives of women on the American home front.

The Sioux Falls branch of the Young Women’s Commercial Club<sup>182</sup> formed the U. S. A. Sisters of Cheer at their meeting on August 1, 1917. The organization encouraged all young women from Sioux Falls and the surrounding area to submit an application to the offices of either the *Sioux Falls Press* or the *Daily Argus-Leader* newspapers. Once a woman completed this form, the Sisters of Cheer provided the name and address of a local soldier and instructions to write to him immediately and regularly. Women were encouraged to send not only letters, but also magazines, cigarettes, chocolate, and other treats. <sup>183</sup> In addition, because these women were writing to strangers, their letters should, as the name of the group implied, be

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<sup>181</sup> See Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: Free Press, 1989) for an example of the suffrage movement as the focus of women’s experience during World War I.

<sup>182</sup> A reference to a Cedar Rapids branch of the Young Women’s Commercial Club exists in *Town & County Edition of The American City*, vol. 14 (New York: Civic Press, 1916), 276-77. The Cedar Rapids Club, formed in 1915 as a branch of the YWCA, helped find employment and education for its bookkeeper and stenographer members.

<sup>183</sup> “Soldiers Will Acquire Sisters,” *Sioux Falls Press* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), August 2, 1917, 5; “Sisters of Cheer are Organized,” *Daily Argus-Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), August 2, 1917, 7; Letter of Instruction, Raab Papers, CWS.

particularly cheerful. They were expected to leave out their own troubles from home and instead write with the sole purpose of brightening the soldier's day.<sup>184</sup>

Vivian Ranney, a Sioux Falls schoolteacher, was one of hundreds of the Sisters of Cheer's initial volunteers. She received her first response from a soldier in the form of a letter dated October 11, 1917 from Bill Edgington. Through the rest of the war, Ranney wrote to another three soldiers; she received letters from Edgington, Fred Lehmkuhl, and Clarence Satnan, and she also had a registration card instructing her to write to Lester Peterson.<sup>185</sup>

While it is difficult to piece together the full extent of Ranney's involvement with the Sisters of Cheer based solely on the letters she received, one thing that is clear from reading these letters is the importance that soldiers placed on receiving mail. Many of the letters Ranney received thanked her for writing and asked her to respond as soon as she could.<sup>186</sup> Other letters testify to the positive mood that followed receiving mail—and the dejection that a stretch without mail caused. Edgington specifically noted a link between the feelings of the men and their work as soldiers, saying that letters “help to keep the spirit of the men, which is the key-note of their advancement in their work.”<sup>187</sup>

That the Sisters of Cheer worked to support men in whatever way they could hints at the traditional ideals that were being pushed on the women of Sioux Falls. As historian Kimberly Jensen noted, “wartime also carries with it strongly conservative elements that re-

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184 “Soldiers Like Cheer Sisters,” *Sioux Falls Press*, October 14, 1917, 14; “Lonely Soldier Wants Comfort,” *Sioux Falls Press*, October 24, 1917, 6.

185 Assorted letters, Raab Papers, CWS.

186 Many of Ranney's letter suggest this, but specific, clear examples can be seen in the following letters: Edgington to Ranney, October 26, 1917; Lehmkuhl to Ranney, August 19, 1918; Satnan to Ranney, Sept 29, 1918, Raab Papers, CWS.

187 Edgington to Ranney, October 26, 1917, Raab Papers, CWS.

impose traditional gender roles and relationships.”<sup>188</sup> On the surface, the Sisters of Cheer were certainly a “strongly conservative element” as the organization allowed women to serve as sisters or friends of soldiers by writing demure letters and sending small gifts to help cheer up a soldier. At the same time, the organization asked these women to write to a complete stranger, send him cigarettes, and otherwise befriend him without knowing a thing about him besides what he wrote in his letters. This concept is in stark contrast to Victorian ideals of propriety in which one 1901 etiquette book equated writing to a strange man with promiscuity.<sup>189</sup> In this way, the very notion underlying the Sisters of Cheer provides an example of the mixed messages that the greater American society sent to women during the Great War; a deeper look at the organization reveals additional examples of this phenomenon.

The image of a woman writing a letter to a lonely soldier evokes feelings of the woman as a demure, nurturing person—very much in line with conventional notions of femininity. The group’s expectations of its members also illustrate society’s view that women should have extensive free time to prioritize writing to soldiers. The instructional letter implores each member to send a letter or package every week, reminds the woman that she may be writing to her soldier for years, and tells her to “SEND AT ONCE!”<sup>190</sup> While the group therefore latched on to this traditional idea that women had ample free time to send letters, the Sisters of Cheer also pushed the bounds of what was considered acceptable for women in the early twentieth century.

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<sup>188</sup> Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), viii.

<sup>189</sup> Annie Randall White, *Twentieth Century Etiquette: An Up-To-Date Book for Polite Society* (1901), 233. The digitized e-version of this book does not include any information on the publisher or location of this book, although the content makes it clear that the book is addressing American etiquette.

<sup>190</sup> Letter of Instruction, November 24, 1917, Raab Papers, CWS.

By encouraging women to write to men who they did not know, the Sisters of Cheer cut through the proper channels of communication that generally existed around the turn of the century. For a woman to randomly meet a man who was unknown to even her friends and family members was simply not done during this era. While meeting in person would certainly have been looked down on, even the act of writing to a stranger would be frowned on by the older generation.<sup>191</sup> Telling women it was suddenly acceptable—even encouraged—to write to strangers was an example of the way in which the Sisters of Cheer conflicted with general social expectations. In addition, the correspondence was not overseen by chaperones or peers, as would have been the case if the man and woman spent time together in person.<sup>192</sup>

Although these women were writing to strangers, the notion was tempered slightly by the fact that the Sisters of Cheer was initially formed for women to write to soldiers from Minnehaha County.<sup>193</sup> Sioux Falls was not a particularly large city, and there was only one high school, so it is entirely possible that a woman would be given the name of a man that she knew. If this was not the case, it seems likely that there could not have been more than two or three degrees of separation between a letter-writing volunteer and a soldier. Therefore the two strangers were not as “strange” to each other as implied by the word, and, being from the same county, they would have similar backgrounds and life experiences. However, as the initiative grew and men from other counties were assigned to Cheer Sisters, this notion was diffused a bit. The expanding reach of the organization is reflective of the growing worldview that has always occurred over time and is frequently accelerated during wartime.

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<sup>191</sup> White, *Twentieth Century Etiquette*, 233.

<sup>192</sup> White, *Twentieth Century Etiquette*, 122.

<sup>193</sup> “Soldiers Will Acquire Sisters,” *Sioux Falls Press*, August 2, 1917, 5

This expanding worldview was also a result of women receiving letters from men who were seeing and experiencing things vastly different from the rural South Dakota scenery and lifestyle the correspondents were accustomed to. Indeed, the letters Ranney received suggest that she used this opportunity to live vicariously through the men to whom she wrote, or at the very least, to learn more about the world outside of South Dakota. At the simplest level, this was achieved via the postcards Ranney received from soldiers. Edgington, Satnan, and Lehmkuhl sent her postcards with images of New York State, Monte-Carlo, and Chaumont, France. While the New York postcard from Edgington does not say anything about the area, other postcards tell Ranney more about what the writers saw during their time in France.<sup>194</sup>

Although postcards provided an easy way to see images of new places and evoked the experience of travelling, even simple letters suggest that Ranney saw writing as an opportunity to learn more about far-away places. This desire is particularly apparent in some letters from Lehmkuhl and Edgington in which they described the landscape and scenes around them when they were at camp.<sup>195</sup> Lehmkuhl also said that “it is hard to tell about the camp as there are so many things that only a soldier can understand and then there is also so much news that we cannot write about on account of censorship.”<sup>196</sup> That he described some of what he was experiencing yet also justified why he could not say more about the army base suggests that Ranney may have specifically asked him about his surroundings. This letter was fairly early in

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<sup>194</sup> Edgington to Sister of Cheer, no date; Satnan to Ranney, Feb 10, 1919; Lehmkuhl to Ranney, no date, Raab Papers, CWS.

<sup>195</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, May 2, 1918; Edgington to Ranney, Oct 11, 1917, Raab Papers, CWS.

<sup>196</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, May 2, 1918, Raab Papers, CWS.

the exchange between Ranney and Lehmkuhl, so it is possible that Ranney merely asked him about the base as a point of conversation, but other letters also include similar descriptions.<sup>197</sup>

One of these later letters that is very telling is that written by Lehmkuhl to Ranney shortly before he believed he was going to sail for France.<sup>198</sup> In reconstructing what Ranney likely wrote to Lehmkuhl, it appears that she sent him a picture of herself, commenting that she wished she was a man so she could fight in the war. Lehmkuhl responded by saying that “wishes can’t always change the situation” but that he would keep her picture in his bill book “so everywhere I go your Photo will be there too, now if Photos count you too will be over there.”<sup>199</sup> Because of gender constraints at the time, Ranney could not go overseas to fight, but the relationship that developed between these two provided a symbolic way for her to experience things that only men could.

Besides using the Sisters of Cheer as a way to experience new things, it is also possible that Ranney used the organization to justify being an unmarried woman, a status that allowed her to continue teaching. In an oral history from 1977, Ranney said that she never had a regular boyfriend when she was a young woman because she “didn’t feel [she] had any business with one” since her business was to care for her widowed mother.<sup>200</sup> She likely saw teaching as a way to financially provide for her mother, and in order to remain a teacher she needed to remain single. A 1935 contract from a Minnehaha County school included a

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<sup>197</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, Mar 30, 1919, Raab Papers, CWS.

<sup>198</sup> The letter from Lehmkuhl dated Aug 19, 1918, suggests that he believed he was to go to France shortly. However, his departure was delayed for at least one month because of the Spanish flu.

<sup>199</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, August 19, 1918, Raab Papers, CWS.

<sup>200</sup> Vivian Ranney Raab, interviewed by Janet M. Cutshall, April 13, 1977. Sioux Falls Oral History Project. Tape 369. Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.

stipulation that the contract would be void if the teacher married.<sup>201</sup> That this exists from as late as 1935 suggests that it was no doubt a condition when Ranney taught during the Great War. While nothing says that the Sisters of Cheer organization was exclusively for single women, it was comprised of young women and many facets of the group seem to suggest that it would be more suited for single women who had more time on their hands and did not have a husband of their own fighting in the war. For this reason, it is possible that Ranney saw her involvement in the Sisters of Cheer as a way to justify remaining single into her mid-twenties and therefore continuing to teach and provide for her mother.

The novel opportunities membership in the Sisters of Cheer offered—namely the acceptability of writing to unknown men, the chance to learn more about the world, and a way to justify remaining single—were likely part of what made the organization so appealing to the women of South Dakota and the independent Vivian Ranney in particular. That United States culture had progressed to a point where these actions were acceptable could explain why there is no evidence of similar organizations existing before the First World War. In addition to speaking to the societal changes preceding the First World War that suddenly made these actions acceptable, the notion of the Sisters of Cheer also tells us about the women who were part of it and shows that they accepted these changes and pushed the bounds even farther when they could.

As the war progressed and Ranney continued to correspond with soldiers, there were some curious modifications to the Sisters of Cheer. Immediately after the formation of the group, the *Sioux Falls Press* published numerous articles about the society, but the frequency of

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<sup>201</sup> Celia J. Benson, *Rural Schools of Minnehaha County 1871-1971* (Decorah: Anundsen Publishing Company, 2008), 29.

these articles dropped off considerably as time went on. One article from April of 1918 includes a message from a Sioux Falls soldier asking for a Cheer Sister. Similar pieces appeared in the latter half of 1917, and these earlier articles generally included a reassurance from the newspaper that a Cheer Sister had been assigned to the man. However, this 1918 article included no such statement and instead simply listed the man's address, leaving it up to some kind reader to write to this soldier. That same article also says that government regulations prohibited people from mailing "candy, tobacco, or any merchandise" to soldiers in France.<sup>202</sup> These changes imply a shift in the function of the Sisters of Cheer, but show that it was nonetheless still in existence. However, an August 1918 letter from Lehmkuhl says that "I had not heard that we are not allowed cheer sisters over in France."<sup>203</sup> By this time, something prohibited women from writing to soldiers through organizations like the Sisters of Cheer.

While neither Susan R. Grayzel's research on the French *marraines de guerre* letter-writers nor Ida Clyde Clarke's book on the Woman's Committee<sup>204</sup> specifically address the Sisters of Cheer, both pieces help to explain what may have happened to the Sioux Falls organization. There is evidence that French soldiers and women they corresponded with sometimes met when the soldier was on leave, and innocent letter-writing relationships could become sexual relationships.<sup>205</sup> These trysts were possible because the women lived close to the location of the fighting, so when men were given leave, they could visit the women who had been writing to them. In contrast, it seems unlikely that this would happen to women of

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<sup>202</sup> "Two Letters in Three Months," *Sioux Falls Press*, April 23, 1918, 10.

<sup>203</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, August 11, 1918, Raab Papers, CWS.

<sup>204</sup> *Marraines de guerre*, which translates to "godmothers of war," was the French title assigned to women who wrote to unknown soldiers. The Woman's Committee was an American organization formed to coordinate the efforts of various women's groups and facilitate communication between these groups and the government.

<sup>205</sup> Susan R. Grayzel, "Mothers, Marraines, and Prostitutes: Morale and Morality in First World War France," *The International History Review* 19, no. 1 (February 1997): 71.

the Sisters of Cheer, since Minnehaha County soldiers were spread throughout the United States and Europe, minimizing the opportunities for them to return to South Dakota on leave. However, it appears that American officials did become aware of what was happening in Europe, since the Woman's Committee later rebuked letter-writing efforts. Clarke's 1918 book notes that similar endeavors in France and England did "more harm than good,"<sup>206</sup> and it seems likely that this was alluding to the godmothers-as-sexual-partners phenomenon documented by Grayzel.

Through all of this, however, Lehmkuhl and Ranney continued to write to one another. By August 1918, they had developed such a rapport that Lehmkuhl wrote "you need not be a cheer sister to me but much nearer, a friend and you may know that even if we only know each other by letter that I wish to be a true friend to you."<sup>207</sup> With this statement, Lehmkuhl effectively worked around the stipulation against Cheer Sisters and ensured the continued correspondence between these two. In addition, his comment illustrates the great change in the relationship between Lehmkuhl and Ranney; what began as Ranney writing to a stranger to help brighten his time in the army turned into a deep friendship that caused Lehmkuhl to end the letter by writing "With Love and Best Wishes I wish to Remain Sincerely your," before signing his name.<sup>208</sup>

Lehmkuhl was eventually deployed to France, where he remained as part of the 212<sup>th</sup> Military Police for some time after the war ended. However, only one letter from Lehmkuhl's time in France survives. In this letter he notes that he had not responded to a number of letters

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206 Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), 421. This was presumably published before the war ended, but there is no indication of exactly when during 1918 this book was published.

207 Lehmkuhl to Ranney, August 11, 1918, Raab Papers, CWS.

208 Lehmkuhl to Ranney, August 11, 1918, Raab Papers, CWS.

that Ranney had already written.<sup>209</sup> For whatever reason, and despite his earlier expressed desire to continue writing to Ranney, the frequency of the correspondence between the Sioux Falls teacher and the soldier greatly diminished. Lehmkuhl also wrote that he would “start on another letter to you before long,”<sup>210</sup> but there are no other letters from Lehmkuhl in the collection.

Perhaps Lehmkuhl’s decreased enthusiasm in writing to Ranney was because he finally realized the odd situation created by writing to a complete stranger, perhaps simply because of the unreliability of mail service, or perhaps because military pressures against writing to strangers was enforced more stringently abroad. Or maybe there were letters that Ranney either intentionally or inadvertently did not donate to historical repositories. Regardless of the exact reason, this sudden end to Vivian Ranney’s time as Fred Lehmkuhl’s Cheer Sister casts a final element of mystery over the concept of the Sisters of Cheer.

This mystery at the end of the war is yet another layer to the enigma of a society that encouraged young women to write to unknown soldiers. Women jumped at the opportunity to communicate with young men who were travelling away from their corner of South Dakota, and Ranney may have used her involvement in the group to justify remaining single and a teacher. As the war progressed, American military and civic officials began to realize the extent to which the Sisters of Cheer and similar organizations stretched social norms. By considering the trajectory of the Sisters of Cheer during the First World War, one sees a different, often overlooked side of women’s experiences during the war.

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<sup>209</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, March 30, 1919, Raab Papers, CWS.

<sup>210</sup> Lehmkuhl to Ranney, March 30, 1919, Raab Papers, CWS.

Although the Sisters of Cheer lost relevance as the war progressed and ultimately fell into obscurity, Ranney's story continued. Ranney eventually stopped teaching school to sell cosmetics and teach violin lessons, and she married Everett Raab when they were both 42 years old.<sup>211</sup> The couple moved back to Sioux Falls in 1950, where Vivian Ranney Raab was active in a variety of civic organizations until her death on February 16, 1985.<sup>212</sup> Eight years prior to her death, though, Vivian summed up her long, full life with "well, it's a great life. I've had a great life. I like it."<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Vivian Ranney Raab interview, CWS.

<sup>212</sup> Vivian Ranney Raab funeral program, Reference Files, SHM.

<sup>213</sup> Vivian Ranney Raab interview, CWS.

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## A History of Counties in South Dakota

Joe Kirby

As a child, I was fascinated with maps. I think that fascination took root during my many visits to my father's office. There, hanging on a wall behind his desk, was a large paper map of the United States showing all the counties in the nation. Throughout the year, he or his secretary would fill in each county with colored pencils based upon the percentage of the probate bond business the company had in the county. Red shades suggested a large market share, while blue ones indicated opportunities for growth. Traveling representatives of my father's company would personally visit the three thousand plus county courthouses and manually count the bonds filed in the past year, then send him a report. He took great pride at showing off the map and explaining the information it contained.



Every year brought a clean, new map. As I studied the maps, I noticed the regional differences in county size and shape. In older eastern states, the counties appeared small and irregular, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. In some states in the middle of the nation, there is a marked similarity in the size and shape of the counties. Out west, counties appeared much larger. In fact, it looked like the transition from small counties to larger ones was marked by a line that cut through our state and ended down in south Texas. I was intrigued about the reasons for all this variety. Those observations stuck with me into my adulthood.

For about a century, starting in the late 1700s, European interest in Dakota was strictly limited to trade, primarily the fur trade. The idea of settling here did not become a focus of discussion until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the earliest reports on the possibilities of settlements came in 1855 from Lieutenant G. K. Warren, then a 25-year-old West Point graduate and civil engineer who participated in the massive surveying effort to study the possibilities of a transcontinental railroad. Lieutenant Warren observed the harsh realities of the place with a clear engineer's eye. "Continuous settlements cannot be made...west of the 97th meridian," he wrote, "both on account of the unfavorable climate and want of fertility in the soil." The 97th meridian runs north south through eastern South Dakota.

Others eager to pursue the development of the frontier were also struck by the unforgiving conditions they found. Accustomed to tillable soil and reliable moisture, they proclaimed the area uninhabitable and unfit for cultivation. Reports suggested that settlement could be hazardous and experimental at best, creating the myth of a 'Great American Desert'.

But these gloomy assessments weren't enough to deter hopeful promoters and speculators, who weren't willing to accept those reports. Prospective settlers were encouraged to ignore the climate issues and try to change the land into the rich, rain-blessed farmland they had left behind in various Eastern states and lands throughout Europe.

Beginning in 1859, developers, railroads and hopeful settlers came to the area, primarily the southeastern part of the territory. These adventurous early settlers faced many adversities through the mid-to-late 1860s, including the harsh climate, droughts, and particularly the grasshopper infestations that hit during 1864 and 1865. Many settlers left the new land in dismay, carrying with them tales of woe that made "Dakota" an uncomplimentary word for several years.

Despite the bad publicity, development continued, and it wasn't long before government infrastructure was put into place. The first legislature in the Dakota Territory met in 1862 and created eighteen counties. Those counties were in the settled farmland of southeastern Dakota and along the Territory's eastern border with Minnesota. At first, the county governments were not very active; about all they did was call elections. Some private neighborhood schools preceded the creation of the first public school system in 1864. In fact, it wasn't until 1869 that the first city, Yankton, was incorporated.

During the 1870s, farming successes were achieved in some areas, seemingly contradicting the pessimistic earlier reports that the area was unsuitable for agriculture. Of course, there were no protracted droughts that decade as there had been in the 1860s. The soil had taken several years of work to maximize yields, and many tough lessons had to be

learned, but by the 1870s crop production in older counties was good. Nevertheless, living conditions in the newly settled areas were often cruel and rigorous.

During the decade called the Great Dakota Boom (1878-1887) most of the land east of the Missouri River became occupied. Improvements in farm machinery and farming techniques allowed less desirable land to be moderately productive. The rapidly expanding railroads and enthusiastic real estate promoters encouraged and enabled settlement.

Speculation, euphoria and hope reigned during the boom period. Settlers rushed in pursuing the choicest claims. Town site promoters clashed over county seat designations, since success in winning those battles and gaining that designation would bring a town the stability of government offices and jobs and help ensure a community's long term survival.

During the peak years of the Great Dakota Boom, much of the large volume of legislation passed concerned the creation of new counties and the revision of county boundaries. The number of counties increased significantly in anticipation of and in response to the territory's increasing population. There were hopes and even expectations that population growth in the state would continue far into the future.

County creation and realignment were a routine diversion for Dakota and then South Dakota legislatures in the late nineteenth century. They apparently considered the county structure to be a work continuously in progress, attempting to create a system that made sense in each part of the state. Nearly every legislature expanded the county grid work farther west into unorganized territory, while simultaneously fine-tuning county boundaries in eastern Dakota. The 1883 legislature wins the prize for county creation. It produced a shocking forty-

one new counties, naming half of them for current or former politicians in the territory. In eighteen others, it redefined or readjusted boundary lines.

Many of the counties created on the western prairies were a fiction, existing only on paper and then only for a finite period of time. Their existence had little to do with actual settlement patterns. That 1883 legislature, for example, divided what is now Butte, Harding and Perkins Counties into a total of eight unorganized counties. In 1897, when the legislature recognized that local growth had failed to meet expectations, all eight were combined into one large county called Butte.

In 1889, South Dakota's final land boom occurred when Indian lands were ceded back for settlement. Thousands of homesteaders came onto the reservations to claim their 160 acre allotment in this semiarid, short-grass country, ever hopeful that the land could support their families.

By the turn of the century, nearly all of South Dakota's eastern counties were organized and well established. West of the Missouri River, the light level of settlement, combined with the overzealous county creation policies of the 1870s and 80s resulted in a map that contained numerous (and what appear to have been fictional or theoretical) counties in largely unsettled terrain. Legislatures continued to tinker with county boundaries and consolidations west of the river well into the 20th century. But they were no longer welcome to make changes east of the river without the blessing of now-well-established local officials.

While the South Dakota county structure borne from the political processes of the nineteenth century was imperfect, it seems to have been workable into the early twentieth century. County seats were accessible, having been situated, according to many accounts,

within a day's or half day's ride by horse from all corners of the county. The state was dotted with villages and towns all serving important social, economic and cultural functions. Those communities supplied a variety of services to the nearby settlers and in turn expected their loyalty if they became involved in a county-seat contest or in some other form of rivalry.

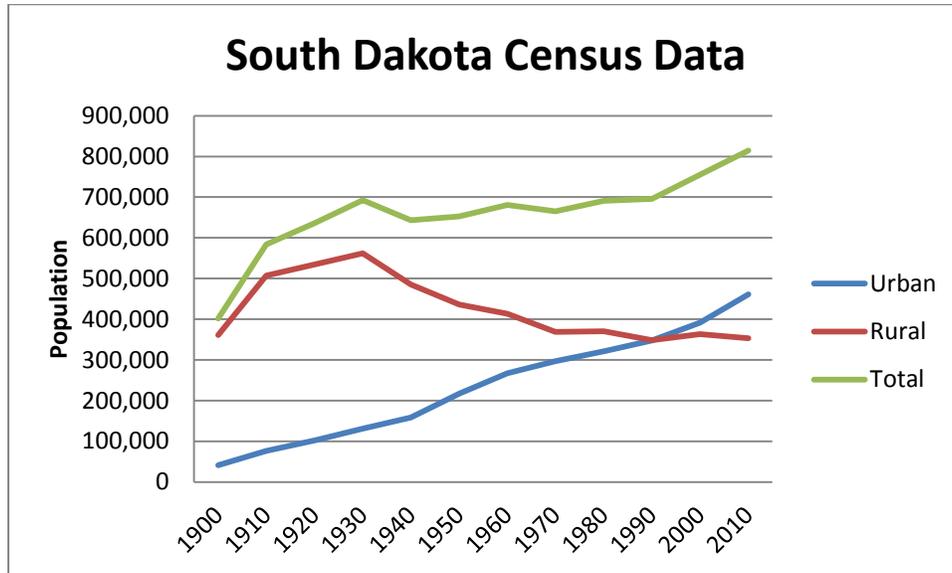
In retrospect, that early twentieth century setup seems to me to be in many ways idyllic. Perhaps it is this romanticized vision some of us secretly harbor in our hearts, hoping for a return to "the good old days." But in the long run, the system of farms with towns close by proved unsustainable.

Rural South Dakota began a slow population decline starting in 1930, not long after the Crash of 1929. The percentage of rural residents dropped steadily throughout the twentieth century from approximately 90% in 1900 to just over 48% in 2000. In 2010 it was down to 43%. The number of rural residents in the state peaked at 562,000 in 1930 and has declined to 354,000 in 2010.

Many of the towns created in the late nineteenth century eventually outlived their usefulness, and disappeared or declined, victims of the technological advances of modern society. Agricultural equipment and practices improved, roads and interstates speeded up transportation and telephones connected all parts of the state.

More fortunate were those towns that became county seats. As the largest administrative division of a state, counties provide essential government services on a local level. They each have a number of elected officials, including commissioners, register of deeds, state's attorney, judges, treasurer, sheriff and auditor. They spend money on roads, public safety, maintenance of government buildings and administrative expenses. County seats enjoy

the permanence provided by the jobs and offices, but they are the exception on the rural landscape.



Meanwhile, urban South Dakota has experienced steady increases in population for over a century. The number of urban residents shot up from 41,000 in 1900 to 460,000 in 2010. Over 56% of South Dakotans now live in urban areas.

The state's total population is at an all time high. It previously peaked in 1930 at 693,000 then dropped precipitously. Growth returned in the 1950s and the population finally exceeded that total in 1990. Twenty years later it was at 814,000. In spite of that growth, the state remains among the most sparsely populated in the nation. South Dakota has 10.7 persons per square mile, compared to a national figure of 87.4.

As a result of the plunge in numbers of rural residents, the population of several South Dakota counties is evaporating. Since 1970, McPherson County's population in the north central part of the state was cut in half from 5,000 to 2,500 in 2010. Next door, in Campbell County the population dropped from 2,900 to 1,500. Many others around the state also lost big chunks of

their population during that forty year period. Forty two of the state's sixty six counties are losing residents, most at a rapid rate. A 1990 comparison of population per county for 18 western contiguous states found South Dakota in last place. In 2010, eleven South Dakota counties met the traditional Census Bureau designation of "unsettled" or frontier territory having two or fewer persons per square mile. Five more have fewer than three and the population in each is declining. Yet each of these counties has a functioning separate county government.

At the other end of the spectrum, eighteen counties have at least 10,000 residents and nearly forty percent of the state's population lives in three counties (Minnehaha, Pennington and Lincoln). Most notably, Lincoln County's population exploded from 12,000 residents in 1970 to 45,000 today.

While some urban centers are thriving in South Dakota, dispiriting evidence of failure and loss is all around us in rural areas. It surrounds us in four generations of abandoned farmhouses and boarded up ghost towns. A quick internet search discloses dozens, if not hundreds, of names of towns that once existed but have now died. South Dakota towns with names like Cascade, Hammer, Okobojo, Moon, Mystic, Two Bit, Texas Town and Safe Investment have disappeared.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has witnessed a trend toward 'bigger is better' thinking which has led to consolidation in business, in agriculture, even in religion and education. This trend translated to rural communities as many small farms and ranches were absorbed by neighbors, and scores of rural churches merged or closed. The painful process of

weeding out and consolidating organizations and association activities of all types eventually included 4-H groups, baseball teams, scout troops, civic groups and commercial clubs.

This transformation drastically affected the rural landscape: every time a small-town church closed its doors, a local business called it quits, or a hospital shut down, one more piece of the local community's identity was lost. While no one readily embraced the changes, most eventually were forced to face facts. Education resisted as long as it could.

One of the hardest actions for South Dakotans to take was to shut down one-room rural schools and organize more efficient school districts. Generations had experienced one-room schools, and many were reluctant to give them up, for both economic and sentimental reasons. At the end of World War II, there were still more than four thousand districts in the state, eighty five percent of them rural one-teacher schools. Twenty years later there were still close to three thousand. The need for change was obvious; however, there was great reluctance to swallow the bitter pill. Then a rare act of top down leadership occurred which changed everything.

In 1967 the legislature passed Senate Bill 130 requiring all public schools to be part of a twelve-year school district within three years. By the end of 1972, only 233 school districts were left in the state. Communities were forced to make a tough choice between the financial sacrifice of keeping the school open or going along with the trend toward consolidation. By the end of the century, fewer than 180 school districts remained in the state. In the span of just over 30 years, the number of school districts was reduced from 3,000 to 180 – a remarkable achievement by any measurement.

It should come as no surprise that some of the historical boundaries between counties and between school districts no longer make sense. For instance, Minnehaha County's boundaries were finalized in 1862 during the Abe Lincoln presidency. Since then, Sioux Falls has grown to the point that it now extends well into Lincoln County, creating overlaps of coverage and services. And the city is now part of five different school districts! That can produce all sorts of unnecessary turf battles and stress for parents and students who happen to live in one, but wish they were in another. It makes far more sense to have one county and one school district covering the greater Sioux Falls area.

The once malleable system of South Dakota counties calcified long ago and is now an anachronism. When that first Dakota legislature met, telegraph was cutting edge technology in communications and horses and coal-fired railroads were the transportation options. Since it was created, cars and airplanes have been invented. Electricity and indoor plumbing have become available. Dirt roads have been paved. Telephones became popular. Television too. And then something known as the Internet came along.

So much has changed since our system of counties was put into place. Many areas of the state have languished, while some others have experienced explosive growth. The fact is, the system was created for a world that no longer exists.

The state map looks about the same today as it has since the beginning of the twentieth century. It shows 66 counties, 64 of which have organized governments. There are 325 county commissioners and presumably sixty some sets of county officials on the job. Generally speaking, they are a savvy group of well-connected people with a financial and political stake in keeping things as they are.

From an efficiency perspective, there doesn't seem to be a reason to maintain so many low-population counties in South Dakota, since big counties apparently work as well as small counties in the delivery of government services. Meade County in the west central part of the state is the largest in South Dakota. At 3,471 sq miles it is bigger than Minnehaha, Lincoln, Turner and McCook Counties combined. In fact, you could throw in Clay and Union Counties as well to make one full size county in southeast South Dakota, and it would still be a bit smaller than Meade. I have heard no suggestion that Meade County is less effective in delivering local government services or that its citizens are underserved. Its population has grown since 1970 from 17,020 to 25,434 in 2010. Big counties apparently can do the job, and there are many examples in other states.

Cherry County in Nebraska borders on South Dakota. Valentine is the county seat. At 5,961 sq. miles it dwarfs Meade County. St. Louis County in northeastern Minnesota is even bigger at 6,247 sq. miles. Also nearby, there are half a dozen counties in Wyoming that are larger than any in our state. And there are even bigger ones, much bigger ones in other states.

I lived in Riverside County in California for several years. At 7,208 sq. miles, it is more than twice the size of Meade County. Eleven counties that size would blanket South Dakota's 77,184 sq. miles. Next door to Riverside is San Bernardino County which is more than twice the size of Riverside. It is the biggest in the country (not counting Alaska) covering 20,052 sq. miles. Big counties seem to have been working well for more than a century.

Not surprisingly, the average per capita cost of county government in South Dakota counties with small populations is considerably higher compared to counties with larger populations. According to a 1997 whitepaper prepared by the University of South Dakota, the

range in the mid-1990s was \$574 per person cost of county government in less populated counties to \$173 in the more populous ones. It identified administrative costs as the greatest area of potential savings. As expected, administrative costs per capita are highest in low population counties, from around \$150 in the least populous counties to \$40 in more populated ones. It showed that but for the biggest few counties, administrative costs per capita leveled off when a county reached a population of 8,000.

South Dakotans tend to pride themselves on common sense, limited government and frugality with taxpayer dollars. Recent governors and legislatures have wrung every taxpayer dime they can out of the budget, perhaps sometimes going too far in areas like infrastructure and education. Given that fiscal frugality, it may seem ironic that South Dakota was identified in a 1959 study as the most over-governed place in the country. Unfortunately, no one in government currently is asking how much that excess government might be costing us today.

In 1959 the legislature asked a Citizen's Tax Study Committee to survey the state's fiscal situation. The committee noted that South Dakota's low population density and lower-than-average per-capita income resulted in above-average government costs. On a per-capita basis, it indicated South Dakotans were the most governed people in the United States, with almost 4,807 units of government, including school districts, counties and townships. It recommended consolidation of governmental functions. Bear in mind, this was well before advances in telephone, television, and satellite technology would shrink distances beyond the imagination of anyone on that 1959 Committee.

Another study in 1989 counted 1,762 different local governmental units, averaging out to one for every four hundred persons, a ratio more than ten times the national average. In

addition to 66 counties, there were 309 municipalities, 984 townships, 193 school districts, and 211 special districts. It concluded that the most obvious place for savings was in the expense of running county government offices. Within a few years of the release of this study, the world became even smaller with the introduction of the Internet.

Perhaps we can ask the question a different way: if we brought the per person administrative cost of county government in all counties down to \$40, what other use could we make of the millions of dollars that might be saved?

Some eastern states have eliminated county governments. Rhode Island has five counties, but no county government since the 19th century. Similarly, Connecticut abolished its county governments in 1960, although the county names remain for geographical purposes. Massachusetts abolished eight of its fourteen county governments leaving five counties with county level local government and one combined county/city government.

There are forty consolidated city/county governments in the United States, including Butte, MT; Denver, CO; Indianapolis, IN; Jacksonville, FL; Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; New Orleans, LA; Philadelphia, PA and San Francisco, CA. Why not Sioux Falls, SD?

So now, 26 years since that last study, we are 15 years into a new millennium, and we have some choices to make. Do we want to saddle our state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a county system from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? We learned back in the 1860s that Dakota soil takes a long time and a lot of work to become productive. When will we start tilling the soil for the South Dakota of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century?

Do we want to keep directing our very limited resources to maintain an excessive county government structure rather than directing it to our schools and the education of the next generations? Rather than directing it to renewing and maintaining our diminished infrastructure?

This won't be easy. I recognize the truth in the axiom that, "all politics is local". County officials are well connected in their locales, wielding significant power during elections. Statewide office seekers come to them for endorsements and help. In addition, thousands of people get their paychecks from county governments in South Dakota. And the towns with county seats would certainly not want to see such a steady employer leave town.

I am not proposing a specific plan. Much study would be required. Changes would need to be phased in. Perhaps the pervasive resistance to change that characterizes so much of Dakota culture will prove impermeable. But I hope raising the issue before a group of people devoted to the history – and presumably the future – of South Dakota will at least start the conversation.

Let me end by referring to a passage from Kathleen Norris's evocative book *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*. She writes movingly of that unproductive longing in the small towns of rural Dakota to 'turn back the clock,' to recapture those boom years of twenty, forty, one hundred years ago, but losing touch with the world as it is. She said we must remember that "Disconnecting from change does not recapture the past. It loses the future."

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# **The Sioux Falls Municipal Band: Traditions and Importance to the Sioux Empire**

By Thomas Norland

Music enhances civilized society. Most societies have some form of music. Great civilizations promoted the creation and performance of music throughout the centuries. The type of community varies across the world and this varies the types of music available to the public. In Sioux Falls, South Dakota there are a variety of performing arts such as the South Dakota Symphony, the Augustana College Music Department, and the South Dakota Community Playhouse. This paper will focus on another of Sioux Falls' performing organizations: The Sioux Falls Municipal Band. This paper will provide background on The Band, examine the traditions of The Band, and explain the importance of The Band to Sioux Falls and the larger Sioux Empire.<sup>214</sup>

The Sioux Falls Municipal Band was founded on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1919.<sup>215</sup> The citizens voted in a tax levy of 4/10<sup>th</sup> mills for the formation of a city band: votes were 2454 in favor of a band with 2277 votes against. It is important to note that this was a tax that the citizens of Sioux Falls imposed on themselves. They saw the importance of music and culture for a city and were willing to be taxed in order to bring that to Sioux Falls. This was the first election that women in Sioux Falls voted because of the passage of

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<sup>214</sup> From this point on, The Band is equivalent to The Sioux Falls Municipal Band. This mimics the style adopted by Dr. Leland Lillehaug in *Music for the People*.

<sup>215</sup> Sioux Falls Municipal Band Collection, Box 1, Folder 1, Sioux Falls Municipal Band Minutes 1919-1938. SFMB and The Band represent Sioux Falls Municipal Band from this point on.

women's suffrage: approximately two fifths of the voters in this election were women.<sup>216</sup> Lloyd M. Coppens was selected to be the ensembles first conductor. He was the director of the El Riad Shrine Band at the time of appointment to director of The Band. Prior to this vote the citizens of Sioux Falls had heard other performing groups such as Stout's Band, the El Riad Shrine Band, the Sioux Falls Fife and Drum Corps, and the 51<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Band.<sup>217</sup> The Band however did not perform its first concert until the next summer because it took time to form and rehearse a new band.

Throughout the early years of The Band leadership shifted four different times: Lloyd Coppens, 1919-21; Charles F. Emmel, 1922; Charles F. McClung, 1923-1927; G.C. McClung, 1928-1929; Otto H. Andersen, 1930-1934.<sup>218</sup> Following Otto H. Andersen, the director of The Band did not change as frequently. The early leadership changes meant that The Band wanted to establish itself in a positive direction and were looking for a strong leader to establish that directive. Sioux Falls wanted an excellent band and realized that they needed an excellent director at the helm.

Russ D. Henegar was that new strong leader and was appointed as director and remained in that position from 1935 to 1963. Under his leadership, The Band became a consistent and integrated part of the Sioux Falls community. According to the annual reports of 1935 and 1936, "the change to making Russ Henegar the director made the band more popular and incredibly successful."<sup>219</sup> Following Henegar was Dr. Leland A. Lillehaug who directed from 1964 to 1986. After he stopped directing, he went on to write *Music for the People*, a book about The Sioux Falls Municipal Band from 1919-1994. He looked at many of the same materials that are used in this paper, but used those to write an extensive history of the band. Alan Taylor conducted from 1987-1991 until Dr. Bruce Ammann took over and

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216 Leland A. Lillehaug, *Music for the People: The Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Municipal Band 1919-1994*, (Freeman, SD: Pine Hill). 1994: 18-19

217 Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 6-13

218 SFMB Collection, Box 4, Folder 1 SFMB Conductors

219 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 1 Annual Reports of Secretary-Treasurer 1935-36

conducted from 1992 to 1995.<sup>220</sup> Christopher Hill became the director in 1998 and has been the director up until the present. Henegar, Lillehaug, and Hill had the longest tenure as directors and have individually shaped The Band the most over the years.

Throughout the 95 years of The Band's existence, external changes have affected The Band. World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Women's Rights Movement redefined the United States. The Band had to adapt to the changed culture in the US in order to continue to flourish. World War II was the first warring conflict that directly impacted The Band.

"It was probably with a big sigh of relief and a heavy load from the mind of our director when after the final descent of the baton he laid it on the stand at the close of the final concert of the season as without a doubt this season had more worries for him than any previous year. With still more men being drafted and more difficult than ever to find replacements the season has probably caused a few more gray hairs to appear on Mr. Henegars head. We hope next season will be better in that regard. Nevertheless we think that most obstacles were overcome in good shape and that the season was finished to a satisfactory conclusion. This was the 24<sup>th</sup> season of the band."<sup>221</sup>

The war took young men away from The Band and made it difficult to prepare for concerts because some of the players were overseas. The annual reports that were written after the war's completion mention that veterans came back to visit but few came back to perform with The Band again.

When Dr. Lillehaug took over The Band, major changes were made almost immediately. Some of the members of The Band retired when Russ Henegar retired, leaving open positions in instrument sections such as clarinet, horn, and flute. Two positions in the flutes, the entire section, were opened and needed to be filled. Lillehaug could not find male flautists that were skilled enough to fill the positions and he needed flutes in order for The Band to sound strong. Some Band members wanted him to not have flutes in The Band until males could fill the spots as it was a male-only band until that point. Lillehaug recruited both Kathy Hays and Marilyn Loomis, who were flautists in the Augustana Band, to fill the vacancies. In Lillehaug's words "They were breaking a gender barrier in the Sioux Falls Municipal

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<sup>220</sup> SFMB Collection, Box 4, Folder 1 SFMB Conductors  
<sup>221</sup> SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, 1943 Annual Report

Band as Jackie Robinson had broken the racial barrier in baseball. You have me and you have each other. I don't know what kind of reception you will receive.”<sup>222</sup> This was the 1964 season. Many community members were upset by the addition of women, but over time women were accepted into The Band as older members retired and the younger generation began to become involved.

The Vietnam War impacted the programming of The Band. The new members of The Band believed that the new music of their generation was not appropriately represented because it was not easy to arrange popular songs into band arrangements. The membership of The Band also became larger than usual as college aged youth either joined or left depending on schooling or were being drafted to serve in the war. Many of the older members of The Band had issues with the new generation, specifically with the hair of the young men. Dr. Lillehaug had complaints from a local band director that “it was his responsibility to see that no long hair be allowed.”<sup>223</sup> Lillehaug replied saying that as long as the hair was “clean and properly taken care of” it was not a problem for The Band. Another issue that appeared was youth coming to rehearsals with bare feet. The younger generation wanted to embrace its new found culture and independence but the older generation did not want to break tradition. Older members wanted to make sure that rehearsals remained professional. The Band Board held a meeting on May 29, 1972 and passed a motion that prohibited bare feet in rehearsal and that all members were required to wear shoes.

Since The Sioux Falls Municipal Band's formation they have played at a variety of venues, special events, and times of the year. Throughout the history of The Band, three months are consistently played in from season to season: June, July, and August. Many municipal bands are summer bands and this is the regular concert season. Beyond this time are special concerts as well as spring rehearsals to prepare for an upcoming summer season. Easter concerts were an annual occurrence at the Coliseum until 1945

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<sup>222</sup> Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 100-101

<sup>223</sup> Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 120

and the season ended on Armistice Day, or November 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>224</sup> The Band performed at the dedications of O’Gorman High School, the Royal C. Johnson Veterans’ Memorial Hospital, the Sioux Falls Arena, and the Great Plains Zoo.<sup>225</sup> Each year, roughly forty concerts were performed; at least ten of those were engagements outside the regular season.

The performance venues were typically city parks within Sioux Falls. The most popular parks were McKennan, Sherman, Terrace, and Library parks. Prior to 1943, Sherman and Library had the most concerts played at them but that year ten concerts were played at McKennan, nine were at Terrace, compared to the six performed at Sherman.<sup>226</sup> In 1944 only three concerts were performed at Sherman Park due to flooding. This happened for the next few years eventually phasing Sherman Park out in 1946 in exchange for more concerts at McKennan and Terrace Parks.<sup>227</sup> The parks are a communal space that allows a large audience to hear The Band free of charge. During this time, the concerts were a social and entertainment event for the citizens of Sioux Falls.

The Band played at other locations besides the concerts at the parks and the Coliseum. According to the annual reports of 1930-38, The Band traveled to other communities such as Lennox, Garretson, Pipestone, Rock Rapids, and Yankton. In 1946, The Band travelled to Mitchell, South Dakota to perform a concert as a part of the South Dakota Band Exchange Program. Mitchell wanted to form a municipal band and knew that Sioux Falls’ band was excellent. The following year, the Mitchell Municipal Band formed and they performed a concert in Sioux Falls to give thanks for the previous year’s concert.<sup>228</sup> The Band has served as a model for other communities to establish their own bands. No other band in the region has been as successful as Sioux Falls. The citizens of Sioux Falls pride themselves on having one of the best bands in the region and in the nation. The Band is the second

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224 SFMB Collection, Box 1 Folder 1 Annual Reports 1919-38; Folder 2, 1939-62

225 Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 83-84

226 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, 1943 Annual Report

227 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, 1944-47 Annual Reports

228 SFMB Collection, Box 1, folder 2, 1946-47 Annual Reports

busiest municipal band, by the number of concerts played in a season, in the nation and one of the most well-known. When current director Chris Hill first applied for the job, a friend from Connecticut commented that Sioux Falls has one of the best municipal bands in the country.<sup>229</sup>

The weekly schedule of The Band has changed throughout the years. Today's Municipal Band schedule has performances every Sunday evening at 8pm at Terrace Park and it has been this way for years. Concerts are still played at McKennan Park on Sunday afternoons at 3pm, but those have been replaced by some performances at local retirement communities in Sioux Falls.<sup>230</sup> Since 1965 the midweek concerts have occurred on Tuesday evenings instead of on Thursday evenings.<sup>231</sup> This change occurred while Dr. Lillehaug was the conductor. The son of the conductor, Steven Lillehaug, asked his dad "why don't we go on out-of-town vacations like some of my friends' families?" Dr. Lillehaug responded that the Thursday concerts made it impractical to have out-of-town vacations because of the preparation time needed for that concert as well as the Sunday concerts. His son then asked "Why do you play the midweek concert on Thursday? Why don't you play it on Tuesday? Then wouldn't there be more time?" Dr. Lillehaug explored the possibility of moving the concerts to Tuesday evenings and found that band members preferred Tuesday concerts in case work required travel during the week. An earlier midweek concert meant that band members would not have to be as concerned about returning to Sioux Falls for a concert on Thursday evening. There was also no financial advantage for the city to have the concerts on Thursday so the change was made. Today's weekly schedule includes a Monday night rehearsal, Tuesday evening concert, Sunday afternoon, and Sunday evening concerts with special concerts mixed in.

In 1966 the annual Circus Concert was established after a discussion with bass drummer Paul Hoy. Hoy was a circus musician prior to joining The Band in 1957. He programmed the circus concert

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<sup>229</sup> "Meeting with Chris Hill." Interview by author, May 9, 2014.

<sup>230</sup> Sioux Falls Municipal Band Schedules 2009-13

<sup>231</sup> Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 105

that year because he thought that the audience would enjoy a circus themed concert. He was correct, and due to its popularity the concert became an annual occurrence.<sup>232</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Hoy were dedicated to the idea of the circus concert that they passed out balloons to children and printed special programs for the concert.<sup>233</sup> Hoy continued to program the concert while Dr. Bruce Ammann conducted.<sup>234</sup> Hoy continued to program the Circus Concert until his death in 2003-2004. <sup>235</sup>Since then, the circus concert has been called the Paul Hoy Circus Concert in memory of him. At the time of his death he was the oldest member in The Band's existence at 93 years old and he played his last concert with the youngest member, Emily Brandel, who was 14. He had a large impact to The Band during his tenure as the bass drummer and held the position of Band Secretary-Treasurer for decades.<sup>236</sup>

In addition to the circus concert the annual Children's Concert began in 1966. Dr. Lillehaug was trying to attract youth and their families to The Band concerts. The Children's Concert is different from other concerts because the band members are not allowed to come in the usually uniforms. The members are instead required to come in costumes that are also child appropriate. Al Berdahl and Scott Faragher are the reasons why the costume must be child appropriate. Al was born without a forearm on his left arm.

"The two came as cowboys and staged a duel in front of the stage. Al uncovered his partial arm, which was covered with ketchup or something red, and claimed that Scott had shot off his arm. Several kids were sitting on the grass fairly close to the stage and began to scream. To those of us who knew that Al never had all of that arm and hand, it was funny."<sup>237</sup>

The Children's Concert has been a consistent program since 1966 but programming changed in 2000.

Phil Baker, a local children's entertainer, has been a guest of The Band for this concert every year since 2000 at the invitation of Chris Hill. Baker was the official entertainer at two White House Easter Egg

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<sup>232</sup> Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 105-106

<sup>233</sup> SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 6, Annual Report 1984

<sup>234</sup> "Meeting with Dr. Bruce Ammann." Interview by author. April 28, 2014.

<sup>235</sup> Interview with Chris Hill

<sup>236</sup> SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folders 2,4,6,7 Annual Reports

<sup>237</sup> Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 107-109.

Hunts since he began performing with The Band. Chris's intention behind having Phil perform was to increase the number of children and families who attended the concert, and Baker's presence has indeed dramatically increased the audience size.<sup>238</sup> Baker's set list has been consistent over the years and is one of the most popular concerts of the season.<sup>239</sup>

Besides the annual Circus and Children's Concerts are other themed concerts: Sousa, Jazz, All March, Music from a specific decade, and the Grand Finale Concert.<sup>240</sup> These concerts have consistently been the most popular throughout the existence of the ensemble and appear in the modern performance schedule of The Band. Certain pieces of band literature have become standard selections that The Band plays during the summer, such as: *Stars and Stripes Forever*; *In the Mood*; *Morning, Noon, and Night in Vienna*; *Overtures of major operas*; *English Folk Song Suite*; *The Planets*.<sup>241</sup> In 1972 an "Opener" and "Closer" were written for The Band by Lloyd Norlin and are still played at every single concert to the present.<sup>242</sup>

Soloists are a highlight of Sioux Falls' talent. These soloists are either members of The Band, community vocalists, or guest soloists brought in by the conductor. Since the creation of The Band, soloists have been an integral part of the programs performed. Soloists are not necessarily the best players in the band, but members are able to solo if they express interest with the director. The soloists are also not from specific sections, but come from all sections of the band and can also vary in age and experience. Soloists are typically the older players in the section but younger members solo if they desire. While Dr. Ammann was director, he made sure to include at least one instrumental soloist on each concert to showcase the talent of The Band. He also wanted to have guest soloists with The Band to enhance the concerts. Dr. Ammann was able to provide one professional guest soloist each year

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238 Interview with Chris Hill

239 SFMB Collection, Box 7, Folder 2, SFMB Programs 1998-2003

240 Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 110

241 SFMB Collection, Boxes 5,6,7, SFMB Programs 1920-2003

242 Lillehaug, Leland, A., *Music for the People*, 112

which allowed the audience to hear new styles of music as well as outstanding performers from across the nation.<sup>243</sup>

The Band also plays at major holidays. Armistice Day/Veterans Day was typically the conclusion of the season and was played at consistently from the creation of the band until Dr. Ammann's time as director. Dr. Ammann felt he had to stop performing that concert as it was a logistical nightmare to organize. Some of the members were no longer in Sioux Falls in November or busy that time of the year so it made forming a strong band difficult. In his view, it would be good to play for Veterans Day, but it is just too difficult to continue that tradition today.<sup>244</sup> The Band has been a part of the Armed Forces Day Celebration at the VA Hospital since 1981.<sup>245</sup> Prior to Armed Forces Day's creation, the official start of the season was Memorial Day. The letter that new members received in 1964 stated that "the first appearance of the band will be on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, at the Veterans Administration."<sup>246</sup> Independence Day adds two performances for that week, making the week of Independence Day the busiest week every season. The two concerts on July 4<sup>th</sup> are an afternoon concert at Falls Park for the Mayor's Picnic and that evening at the W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds for the Jaycees 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.<sup>247</sup> A performance on the 4<sup>th</sup> has been consistent since the start of the band, but the Mayor's Picnic became consistent under Mayor Dave Munson in 2006 and the Jaycees celebration was started around that time.

Sioux Falls has grown substantially since The Band was formed in 1919. Numerous retirement communities have been developed across the city. These residents pay taxes to the city but many of them who would like to see The Band perform are physically unable to attend the concerts in the park. This was a dilemma that Dr. Lillehaug sought to rectify. Prior to 1973 he talked with band members and

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243 Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 193-94

244 Interview with Dr. Bruce Ammann

245 Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 145

246 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Member Acceptance Letter Blank May 18, 1964

247 Interview with Dr. Bruce Ammann

city administrators about purchasing a moveable stage. A moveable stage called The Showmobile was purchased in 1973. The mentality behind purchasing was to “take the music to the people” and The Band did just that by performing at more retirement communities and residential locations.<sup>248</sup> The Showmobile is a moveable stage that can support and amplify the sound of The Band at non-park locations.

Since the Showmobile was purchased, more concerts have been played at the retirement communities over the years and fewer concerts have been at the parks during the seasons. When Dr. Ammann was director, The Band played at every retirement community in the city.<sup>249</sup> This is no longer possible because Sioux Falls has grown substantially over the last twenty years. Dr. Ammann suspects that a shift will have to occur either by rotating retirement communities every year, reducing the number of concerts played at the communities, or combining the communities located near each other into one concert.<sup>250</sup> Chris Hill has been tackling the problem of municipal growth. The retirement communities that have consistently high concert attendance continue to have concerts performed by The Band as this lets the largest amount of people hear The Band. A new way that The Band hopes to reach people is by performing at the newly constructed Greenway downtown. This new venue will allow citizens to hear The Band in a new setting that may be closer to home.

The primary purpose of a municipal band is to provide entertainment for a community. The Band does this by performing at parks and retirement communities across the city. When the idea of a municipal band was first discussed by Sioux Falls residents it was for the purpose of providing entertainment and to create a sense of civic pride. Article II: Object of the Sioux Falls Municipal Band Constitution of 1956 states what the object of The Band is: “The object of this organization shall be to encourage the study of music and improve the musical efficiency of the members; and to give public and

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<sup>248</sup> Lillehaug, Leland A., *Music for the People*, 112-113

<sup>249</sup> Interview with Dr. Bruce Ammann

<sup>250</sup> Interview with Dr. Bruce Ammann

private performances for mutual profit and the entertainment of our patrons.”<sup>251</sup> Dr. Harry Krueger, cornetist and former Augustana Brass Choir director, expressed his views to director Dr. Lillehaug in a 1974 letter.

“The band as an organization seems to be so formal and under regulations that it takes away some of the more aesthetic reasons that really are the main reason for our existence. I’ve just reread the constitution and even though I basically feel that this does set down some guide rules it also has a way of stifling the pure act of performance and pretty soon the concert idea becomes just a “job.” . . . I just don’t feel that the band should be handled as a job. ... Before moving to Sioux Falls I played with a Municipal Band for ten years that I felt was one of the most unusual experiences that I’ve ever had. The warm feeling of the band members toward each other and the director (there was no constitution or board) was a unique thing...”<sup>252</sup>

Krueger wanted to make sure that The Band remained an enjoyable experience for the musicians as well as the citizens of Sioux Falls. In his mind, The Band should be for the entertainment of the people and be a pleasurable experience, not a strenuous work environment.

The constitution states that one of the objects of The Band is to promote the study of music as well as make the musicians better. The age of the members shows that musical experience varies across the ensemble but, everyone has the common goal of creating music. The requirements for membership are listed in Article VI Membership Section 1. of the 1956 constitution: “Any qualified instrumentalist who is a member of the American Federation of Musicians is eligible to membership in this Band.” Since that constitution was written, it is no longer a requirement to be a member of the American Federation of Musicians. Most college aged students are not members of this organization and play in The Band for fun and money.

Others outside of Sioux Falls have written about how municipal bands enhance everyone involved. Joseph Albright writes in the Instrumentalist, a musician’s magazine, about the social benefits of being involved in a band. Adults use it to continue playing their instruments after they leave school. The younger performers in the ensemble and those listening use bands as a source of inspiration.

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251 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Sioux Falls Municipal Band Constitution 1956

252 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Letter to Dr. Leland Lillehaug September 26, 1974 by Harry Krueger

Audience and community members get to enjoy free live concerts in their city. Municipal bands are social events where music teachers who play in the ensemble can share experiences and also use the summer season to prepare for the next school year. College and high school players that enjoy playing can continue playing throughout the summer and make some money on the side while still maintaining a daily job. Professional musicians can use municipal bands to make extra income while doing something that they enjoy.<sup>253</sup>

Municipal bands serve a function by allowing post-educational students the opportunity to continue performing while pursuing other interests outside of music. Learning is a lifelong process and applies to music. Having an outlet that lets talented musicians continue playing is a positive thing for the players and the community. Willard Musser argues that “Instrument music education, if it is going to prove its true value, must be extended into the community.”<sup>254</sup> Younger players enjoy the opportunity to perform band standards and interact with older players who continue to play their instruments.

Municipal band concerts allow the older students to learn and either expose or encourage young children to become involved in music. Dr. Ammann elaborates on the point about free live concerts by using a comparison to a symphony concert. Families are able to bring their young children to a park where they can eat, play, and relax all on their own time without having to sit still at a symphony concert. Parents are not forced to pay hundreds of dollars on symphony tickets in order to show their children live music.<sup>255</sup> The parents can also let their children run around and play Frisbee to stay active and entertained if the concert is not entertaining enough. Hopefully the concerts will inspire the children to become involved in band and continue spreading music to the masses. Audience members are also able to bring comfortable chairs and use the concert as a social gathering for the community.

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253 SFMB Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, **Summer Bands Spell**, Joseph Albright, Instrumentalist, June 1985. 46-48

254 SFMB Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, **Community Bands and Music Education**, Peter Martin, The School Musicians, April 1986. 6-9

255 Interview with Dr. Bruce Ammann

Another purpose of The Band is to provide feelings and emotions to people in a way that nothing else can. The Band plays at many retirement communities across the city and plays a variety of music. Much of the music performed is focused at the generation of the residents. *In the Mood* is one of the most frequently performed jazz charts that The Band has. Many of the residents listened and danced to that song growing up. The residents are brought back in time to their youthful days and get the chance to relive those days. The Band has had many stories in the ninety plus years of existence but this is one of the most touching stories documented:

“One of the most poignant scenes that I have ever witnessed occurred at Mom and Dad’s Nursing home in Sioux Falls during a midweek evening concert. Previous to the concert, one of the aides brought a resident from the home and seated her in close proximity to the Showmobile stage. They said she was blind and completely deaf. During the concert she placed her hands on the metal edge of the stage and smiled almost continuously throughout the concert. Evidently she was able to feel the vibrations and gave her pleasure. It was an emotionally touching scene. I always felt that if a national news crew could have filmed those moments it would have made the national network news.”<sup>256</sup>

Music creates powerful feelings and emotions like no other medium can. Music has been a healing tool for centuries and it is integral part humanity’s daily cycle. It is nearly impossible to pass through a day without being subjected to music. Live music has become less prevalent since recording equipment has advanced and there are people that believe that music is unimportant. When presented with some of the stories and arguments as to why a municipal band is important, it is hard to keep the position that music is nonessential. Music changes lives. The Sioux Falls Municipal Band is important to the community because it provides live entertainment, civic pride, and brightens the day of its citizens on concert days.

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256 SFMB Collection, Box 1, Folder 6, Anecdotal Stories 17.

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## **Robinson's History of North Dakota:**

### **May It Rest in Peace**

Kimberly K. Porter

On November 6, 1958, Elwyn B. Robinson, Professor of History at the University of North Dakota, stood before his colleagues on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the institution. Regarding his audience of “thoughtful people,” he challenged: “What are the great themes of North Dakota history? How are they related to each other? How are they tied to the fundamental facts about the state?” Undoubtedly hearing no response to the rhetorical questions, he provided a carefully crafted argument. It focused upon six themes which he believed essential to understanding the past, as well as the future of the state: remoteness, economic disadvantage, radicalism, dependence, adjustment and the “Too-Much Mistake”.<sup>1</sup>

A year had not passed when Robinson refined his thematic conceptualization of North Dakota history with an essay simply titled: “Six Themes of North Dakota History”. Little had changed since his presentation, excepting his assuredness in his thematic guideposts to the history of his adopted state.<sup>2</sup> All was in prelude to the book he had spent the majority of his career contemplating, researching and writing.<sup>3</sup>

At its appearance in 1966, *History of North Dakota* met with rave reviews. Assorted book reviewers described the volume as “absorbing,” “fascinating,” “astonishingly comprehensive,” and “balanced”. However, the more adept reviewers noted one additional factor: Robinson’s work moved the concept of state history to new heights. Previously, state history had oft times met with derision in academic circles. However, upon a close reading of

the text, reviewers observed that Robinson's work could be considered little less than a breakthrough in the genre.<sup>4</sup>

Reviewers from such diverse publications as *Arizona and the West*, the *Journal of American History*, the *American Historical Review*, and the *Journal of Economic History*, noted that Robinson had broken the boundaries of traditional state history, not only by expanding his lens to the region, as well as to the nation, but also by including material more traditionally considered as anthropology, geography economics, political science, and sociology. Rather than simply a narrative of events and individuals, Robinson worked from his interpretive framework of the six themes, grounded in the geographical realities of the state.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps John Schlebecker most clearly articulated the true significance of Robinson's achievement. Writing for the *Journal of Economic History*, he observed: "This history could well be used as a model for other state histories. Practitioners of this art have produced some excellent work of late, but this is it, I think, the best so far." Declaring the *History of North Dakota* to be path breaking in the 1960s is one thing, to have it remain so in the first decade of the new millennium is quite another. Clearly Robinson has served his sentence. In the aftermath of Robinson's interpretive framework, no historian of the North Dakota experience—at least in its entirety—could afford to ignore the by now infamous "six themes". And, to date, none has with absolute assuredness.

Topics worthy of further consideration are legion, and a lifetime of scholarship remains to be tackled and do not necessarily hew to the six themes: the natural environment, the place of women and minorities, the arrival of the electronic age, the decline of the primacy of agriculture as a way of life, the alleged brain-drain, the place of North Dakota in the national

consciousness, and so much more. However, before those subjects are tackled, it is perhaps worthwhile to consider the words of historian Thomas W. Howard, UND, from 1981. In *The North Dakota Political Tradition* he observes:

It is a good thing, whether as an individual or as a community, to pause now and then and reflect upon the past. Where we are going—and where we want to go—is influenced by where we have been in the same way that an individual is often inspired by the milestones of life—ranging from school graduation to retirement—to take stock of the past and to plan for the future, a community is inspired to reflect upon its past as it commemorates a centennial and plans for the future.<sup>6</sup>

If reflection was a good thing to commemorate our 100th anniversary of statehood, can it be all that bad as we drift past our 125th?

First, there may be wisdom in a quick re-examination of the themes Robinson provided us and which have guided us as teachers and historians for the last 50 years.<sup>7</sup>

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|----------------|--|
| #1 Remoteness  | "By remoteness I mean the influence of the great distance between North Dakota and the chief centers of population, industry, finance, culture, and political decision in the nation and in the Western World."                                      |
| #2: Dependence | "The word dependence stands for North Dakota's status as a colonial hinterland."   |
| #3 Radicalism  | "Radicalism is a term for the struggle against the status as a colonial hinterland."   |
| #4: Economic   | "The position of economic disadvantage refers both to the wide fluctuations in North Dakota's income and to the lower-than-average per capita income that North Dakota as an agricultural state has generally received in good times and bad alike." |
| #5: Too-Much   | "The Too-Much Mistake is my name for too many farms, too many miles of railroads and roads, too many towns, banks, schools, colleges,  |

churches, and governmental institutions . . . beyond the ability of the state to maintain."

#6: Adjustment      "Adjustment means both the painful cutting back of the oversupply of the Too-Much Mistake and the slow forging of more suitable ways of living in a sub humid grassland."

Robinson's six themes derived both from his study of North Dakota history and from his familiarity with main currents of Western American historiography. While his interpretations of the state's past have been criticized by some, they have been adopted as standard wisdom by most. They have provided the lenses by which North Dakota has been examined and interpreted for the last five decades, perhaps to our detriment.

Perhaps it is time to reflect.

Without the slightest of doubts, North Dakota is geographically **remote**. It does, after all, lay claim to being the geographic center of the North American continent. That obvious statement out of the way, it seems to me that remoteness is not what it used to be. Undoubtedly, the continental climate can still wreak havoc upon the best laid plans. That said, with the rise of electronic communications, the willingness of Plainsmen and women to travel considerable distances by automobile, airplane and Amtrak, the significance of this theme seems to have shrunk with our sense of distance.

The development of a national culture has also served to shrink our sense of remoteness. Individuals all across the nation watch the same television shows, follow the same musicians, keep up with the latest gossip with "Facebook", and share pictures instantaneously via the wonders of miniscule keyboards and digital satellites. Moreover, all dress from Old Navy, Aeropostale, American Eagle and Abercrombie, while eagerly awaiting the arrival of the

People magazine and the latest news on Brad and Angelina. And what is Bruce Jenner up to these days? The last year's suits which once could be sold in Grand Forks, having been purchased at cut rate prices in New York, now find no market. Not only do the gentlemen of North Dakota know the latest styles, they generally don't wear suits and ties!

Similarly, it appears to me that the concept of **dependence** and our placement as a colonial hinterland has been over-stated. As John Donne tells us in Meditation XVII, "no man is an island". All nations and individuals are dependent upon on another for some aspect of their existence. North Dakota is no different on this account. While we may import goods and services, we also have the materials and intellect to export items to the larger world, tangible or not; items that are in particular demand: oil, agricultural products, natural gas, electrical energy, etc. Perhaps dependence should be replaced with **interdependence** given the symbiotic nature of the relationship as it has developed?

**Radicalism?** It has never truly struck me that the state of North Dakota in the latter 20th century or the early 21st century can lay claim to significant nascent radicalism. While it may have been true that the rise of the Nonpartisan League a century ago illustrates a past toying with radicalism, we have not of late shown ourselves to be particularly rambunctious. Indeed, some would refer to us, as a people, in terms rather opposite. We toe the Republican mark with regularity, seek government dollars with the rest of the nation, offer up platitudes against abortion, gay rights, alternative lifestyles (whatever that means), and are considered to be one of the most God-fearing states in the nation. In an autumn 2012 Gallup poll, 42 percent of North Dakotans proclaimed themselves to be "very religious", while 29% referred to

themselves as “moderately religious”. The remainder murmured that they were “nonreligious”.<sup>8</sup>

If radicalism can be measured as a factor of violent crime, North Dakota ranks 49th of the states, including the District of Columbia, in proportion to its population.<sup>9</sup> Rare is the outbreak of rioting, gun-slashing or rampaging crowds. Radicalism in an alternative sense will be considered at a later point in this endeavor.

**Economic disadvantage?** Robinson’s claim to our state as being one in perpetual poor economic standing does not hold the water that it once did. In Robinson’s era of the six themes, the predominance of the economy rested upon the backs of its farmers and ranchers, resulting in a fluctuating standard of living based upon world output and world demand for our agricultural commodities, as well as the whims of Mother Nature. The result was instability and a lower-than-average per capita income. In general, this has been true throughout the first century of our statehood.

This would appear to be in the process of change. Recent figures from the University of New Mexico’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research point to six consecutive years of per capita income for North Dakotans rising above that of the national average. And while a considerable portion of that income derives from recent oil production and associated tasks, not all does. Also to be included are construction endeavors, communications technology and improved agricultural prices.<sup>10</sup>

Measured by Gross Domestic Product, North Dakota is presently the fastest-growing state in the nation, with an annual growth rate of 8.3%. The economy of North Dakota had a

gross domestic product of \$36.8 billion in 2013.<sup>11</sup> Also dependent upon statistics from 2013, a Gallop Poll had North Dakota leading the U.S. in job creation, a role it has held since 2009.<sup>12</sup> North Dakota has added 56,600 private-sector jobs since 2011, creating an annual growth rate of 7.32 percent. According to statistics released in March 2014 by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, North Dakota's personal income grew 7.6 percent in 2013 to \$41.3 billion. Moreover, the state has recorded the highest personal income growth among all states for the sixth time since 2007.<sup>13</sup>

Not all businesses come in forms traditional to the plains and prairies, however. For example, Fargo is home to the second-largest campus of Microsoft with 1,700 employees, and Amazon.com employs hundreds in Grand Forks.<sup>14</sup> As of May 2014, the state's unemployment rate was the lowest in the nation at 2.6% and it has not touched 5 percent since 1987.<sup>15</sup> Budget surpluses provide a feast in the midst of famine elsewhere in the nation.

The **Too-Much Mistake** has become, arguably, the best known of Robinson's themes of North Dakota history. Personally, it is the one with which I take the greatest exception. That our forefathers and foremothers approached the settlement of the Great Plains of North Dakota as well as its eastern valley with a sense of optimism should not be turned against them. While they most certainly planned big, that would be too big, to chastise them for the advice garnered by attention to their federal government, their bishops, their elected officials, and their predecessors is to fault them unnecessarily. Had they proven correct in their actions of planting too many towns, churches, schools, miles of road, levels of government, and the like, we would be celebrating their farsightedness. Optimism should not be looked upon as a fool-hardy mistake, but rather admired when held to some realistic standard.

Adjoining the Too-Much Mistake is Robinson's **Adjustment**, as in "both the painful cutting back of the oversupply of the Too-Much Mistake and the slow forging of more suitable ways of living in a subhumid grassland." This I would argue is an appropriate attitude for the students of North Dakota, regardless of age or circumstance to embrace. Change has been one of the few constants over the century and a quarter that the state has existed. That change has come for the better and for the worse; that change is reflected in the politics of the state, the approach to the environment, the role of women and minorities, the value placed upon technology, the comings and goings of towns, churches, and miles of track and roadway. We have welcomed the federal government into our lives where we once spurned it, cheerfully claiming farm subsidies, assistance in the construction of dams, highways and greenways, and courting the creation of defense mechanisms.

We have changed from an almost exclusive reliance upon wheat and now grow such diverse crops as corn, soy beans, dried beans, lentils, sugar beets and sunflowers. Buffalo roam again on the plains and prairies, as well as an occasional emu.

We have consolidated schools, shuttered churches, folded businesses, printed our last editions and joined farm to farm to vastly exceed the 160 acres offered by the terms of the Homestead Act. If we know anything, we know how to adjust to the vagaries of living in North Dakota.

Despite having argued that Robinson's themes have reached their expiration date, it would be inadvisable to dismiss them in their entirety. Robinson was right. But he was so in 1966, albeit as a reflection of his own background in North Dakota's most desolate years. Since the publication of his masterpiece, thousands of readers, student and adult, have taken his

messages to heart. This is not to downplay the majesty of his work, but only to suggest that it is time to give those thirsty scholars a new world view, a new set of lenses, perhaps one's better ground to present-day North Dakota.

What can be offered in intelligent replacement of the vaunted six themes? I proffer a few, still tentative, suggestions. Firstly, the entirety of our story is grounded in our land. The first line of Robinson's History of North Dakota tells us: "The story of North Dakota begins with geology." I might add that it is also grounded in our geography. Our landscape dictates certain strictures: we cannot raise bananas or sensibly offer tropical vacations to eager tourists. Due to our location, we have somewhat intemperate winters—isn't it said that 40 degrees below keeps the riffraff out? Our precipitation can be somewhat slight, except when it vastly exceeds predictions and washes entire cities clean.

It is the geography and the geology that give North Dakota some of the richest soil in the world, as well as vast deposits of coal, natural gas and oil. Gusty breezes propel the blades of windmills, generating electrical energy. Let's call this theme: **location**, combining within it the conceptualizations of geology and geography. And I will take the blow for being an environmental determinist.

Let's acknowledge that we are always in a state of flux, adjusting and adapting to the changing world. We've learned to operate combines with GPS, the horse-drawn binder can safely be sent to the State Historical Society for display. Technology can substitute for the local pharmacy and blogs can keep us up on what the neighbors are doing. Or else we can watch them from our windows with binoculars as we have always done. Adjusting and adapting are part of everyone's world, so we might as well accept and endure, or accept and appreciate the

challenges provided us. As a theme, we can continue to embrace Robinson's **adjustment**, but with less a grimace and more a smile. Perhaps having a sense of humor should be counted as one of the themes that Robinson failed to mention.

Let us always remember that while no man is an island, and no woman is either, we can respond to the challenges before us not with simple acquiescence, but rather with calculated citizenship. North Dakotans are the champions of the initiative and referendum, as well as the recall. If my memory serves me correctly we have sent more than one scoundrel packing for his perceived malfeasance, and we have voted on more legislation than I care to contemplate at this late hour. In November 2014 eight questions faced us as we cast our ballots: life, parenting, pharmacy ownership, taxes, conservation, and education. We have even made parking meters illegal. We take these matters seriously, and generally vote in percentages higher than most of our neighbors. If this be radicalism, as has been suggested, so be it. I prefer to think of it as **responsible citizenship**.

That we can be active participants in our own lives, in the history of our state and our region has not always been impressed upon us. Dare I say, there has been a sense of negativity in the themes memorized and tested upon, themes which may, or may not, guide the leaders of our state, our schools, our cities, our homes and our families. Let's turn from adjustment in a negative sense and term the changes we must meet as **renewal**. Moreover, let's embrace a more positive understanding of the state, and tell the Poppers that they were wrong about our impending demise.

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<sup>1</sup> Elwyn B. Robinson, "The Themes of North Dakota History," revision of 75th Anniversary address, [www.und.nodak.edu/dept/library/Collections/Robinson/themes.html](http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/library/Collections/Robinson/themes.html), retrieved July 23, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Elwyn B. Robinson, "Six Themes of North Dakota History," *North Dakota History* 20.1 (Winter 1959): 5-24.

<sup>3</sup> D. Jerome Tweton, "Preface to the North Dakota Edition: Elwyn Robinson and the Themes of North Dakota History," Elwyn B. Robinson, *History of North Dakota* (Fargo: Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in *ibid.* See as well, Larry Remele, "North Dakota's Changing History," *North Dakota Quarterly* 56.4 (Fall 1988): 284-293.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas W. Howard, editor, *The North Dakota Political Tradition* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1981), North Dakota Centennial Series, vii. It is worthwhile noting that the volume was dedicated to Robinson, "teacher, colleague, friend"

<sup>7</sup> Robinson, "Themes of North Dakota History."

<sup>8</sup> Frank Newport, "Mississippi Maintains Hold as Most Religious U.S. State", February 13, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/160415/mississippi-maintains-hold-religious-state.aspx#2>, accessed October 13, 2014. A Gallup poll of one year later placed the religious of North Dakota at 46%, the moderately religious at 32% and the irreligious at 22%. See <http://www.christianpost.com/buzzvine/most-and-least-religious-states-in-america-where-does-your-state-rank-chart-113962/>, accessed October 13, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> United States Department of the Census, "Violent Crimes per 100,000 Population—2006", <http://www.census.gov/statab/ranks/rank21.html>, accessed October 10, 2014. Crime may not be the best measure of radicalism, but rather of poverty and a sense of being downtrodden, however, political crimes might well be categorized as radical.

<sup>10</sup> Bureau of Business and Economic Research (University of New Mexico), "Per Capital Personal Income by State," <https://bber.unm.edu/econ/us-pci.htm>, accessed October 1, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Gross Domestic Product by State," xxx, October 12, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Adam O'Neal, "North Dakota Again Tops Jobs-Creation List, D.C. Second," Real Clear Politics, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/02/12/north\\_dakota\\_again\\_tops\\_job-creation\\_list\\_121555.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/02/12/north_dakota_again_tops_job-creation_list_121555.html), accessed September 14, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Lydia Saad, "North Dakota Leads in Job Creation for Fifth Straight Year". <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167126/north-dakota-leads-job-creation-fifth-straight-year.aspx>, accessed September 15, 2014; Mike Nowatzki, "N.D. leads nation in personal income growth again". Prairie Business. <http://www.prairiebizmag.com/event/article/id/18355/group/Energy%20and%20Mining/>, accessed September 15, 2014; "ND records nation's highest personal income growth". Yahoo News. [http://news.yahoo.com/nd-records-nations-highest-personal-184135151.html;\\_ylt=AwrBJR92zjFTdTIAAGHQtdMD](http://news.yahoo.com/nd-records-nations-highest-personal-184135151.html;_ylt=AwrBJR92zjFTdTIAAGHQtdMD), accessed September 14, 2014; Daniel Graeber (26 March 2014). "Economy in oil-rich North Dakota booming". [http://www.upi.com/Business\\_News/Energy-Resources/2014/03/26/Economy-in-oil-rich-North-Dakota-booming/4591395839430/](http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Energy-Resources/2014/03/26/Economy-in-oil-rich-North-Dakota-booming/4591395839430/), accessed September 14, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> "Amazon to Expand Customer Service Center in Grand Forks, ND". Bloomberg. <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=conewsstory&tkr=AMZN:US&sid=a5xu7BFKcxB4>, accessed September 15, 2014; Dan Gunderson, "With Microsoft, Hitachi to open software business in Fargo". Minnesota Public Radio. <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2011/12/05/with-microsoft-hitachi-to-open-software-business-in-fargo>, accessed September 15, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/lau/>, accessed September 15, 2014.

## **University of Manitoba and the Weakening of French Language Rights**

Mel Prewitt

There are a number of reasons for the Red River region of Manitoba being a fitting topic for the conference theme of “Where the West Begins?” It is here that the land transitions quickly from the forests and muskeg of the Canadian Shield to the prairie lands of the west. The region also has a long history of community consisting of the French voyageurs, the English employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company, Scottish settlers, and the descendants of these Europeans and the original First Nations peoples. The settlement maintained challenging connections with other Europeans through Hudson Bay to England, through the Great Lakes to eastern Canada, and by canoe routes to the Illinois country and later cart trails to St. Paul. The difficulty of transportation before railroads and steam boats caused the people of Red River to live in relatively peaceful isolation, adapting to the varied land and cultures.

The Manitoba Act, passed in the Dominion parliament in 1870, established the new province and provided constitutional protection for the language rights of the French and English speaking residents. At that time, language use was quite evenly split between these two groups. Social identity was perhaps most visible by language but there were further divisions by religion and class. One of the first actions of the provincial legislative assembly was the establishment of a public school system which would recognize the bilingual and bicultural nature of the population. This effort led to parallel school boards—Protestant and Catholic. It is not surprising that the legislative assembly would address the desire for separate schools which also meant English and French since the assembly itself was bilingual with a mandate imposed by the Manitoba Act that all legislative and judicial actions to be conducted in either language and published in both French and English.

The close connection between education and religion had already existed in the Red River colony for several decades. Catholic missionaries established a school at St. Boniface in 1818. Shortly after this beginning, Anglicans initiated Protestant education at St. John's school in 1820. St. John's and other Anglican schools educated the children of the Anglicans as well as the many Presbyterians for several decades until Rev. John Black arrived to build a Presbyterian Church and school in Kildonan in 1853. Operations of these schools were financed by various combinations of contributions of parent churches and missionary societies, subscriptions, and limited but consistent support of the Hudson's Bay Company. Additional schools, all associated with these religions, were built and the need was soon apparent for secondary and higher education for the region. The establishment of colleges represented natural growth from the primary schools; the Catholic St. Boniface College; Anglican St. John's College; and the Presbyterian associated Manitoba College, established in 1871.

The Catholic and, at the time, mostly Francophone College of St. Boniface was one of the three initial member colleges of the University of Manitoba. Archbishop Taché firmly believed that religion and education were inextricably tied, therefore Catholics should be taught by Catholics. Other early religious leaders must have been in general agreement, leading the new university to be patterned after the University of London where each of the member colleges conducted all of the teaching of their students. Following this model, the university functioned only as an examining institution which would then confer degrees and honors. The governing council of the university consisted of members appointed by each of the three founding colleges, St. Boniface (Catholic and primarily Francophone), St. John's (Anglican), and Manitoba College (Presbyterian) in addition to members appointed by the provincial government. Taché sat on this board as a representative of St. Boniface. Each of the member colleges maintained complete autonomy as far as internal administration. This was the nature of the beginning of the University of Manitoba as a provincial institution in 1877. Like the rest of the changing picture of education in the province, growing Ontarian influence in the province soon led to efforts to discard the University of London model and replace it with the practices of the University of Toronto.

The general agreement of practitioners of modern education was that assimilation of minority groups, whether ethnic, linguistic, or religious, would lead to social equality and inclusiveness. Taché and others were fully aware, however, that assimilation ultimately favored the dominant components of the population. In the argument over control of the university, Taché depended heavily on the support of Sir John Thompson, the federal minister of justice. Considering Thompson a personal friend, Taché conducted considerable correspondence with the cabinet minister, a Catholic Conservative from Nova Scotia.

In an 1889 letter to Thompson, Taché pointed to the verbiage of the act establishing the university: "In the preamble of the Act above referred to, it is stated that the University is to be established on the model of the University of London. This was inserted advisedly, as it was intended and clearly understood that the University was to be an examining body, and not a teaching body."<sup>257</sup> The Manitoba and Northwest School Questions, along with other national issues, caused a strain on Thompson in his position as justice minister and, later, during his brief term as prime minister of Canada. During much of this tense period, the correspondence continued between these two men. Although more than twenty years younger than Taché, Thompson died in 1894, later in the same year of Taché's passing.

The same letter describes amendments to the legislation establishing the university, changes which were not obvious to the Catholic participants in the agreement. Taché explained that the bill was prepared and guided through the legislative process by Joseph Royal who was the Manitoba attorney-general at the time of the legislation in 1877. Thompson was assured by Taché that Royal was not aware that the words "at present" had been added to the Act. This was not clear to his Catholic constituency and was not in the Act as published in French. The published legislation, in English, states:

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257 Letter written by Archbishop Taché to Sir John Thompson, May 15, 1886, quoted in Margaret Scott MacGregor, *Some Letters from Archbishop Taché On the Manitoba School Question* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), 7-8.

There shall be no professorship or other teacher ship *at present* in the university; but its function shall be limited to the examining of candidates for degrees in the several faculties...<sup>258</sup>

At the time that the legislation was passed, a withdrawal of St. Boniface from the university organization would likely have scuttled the whole scheme, but by the time of this correspondence between Taché and Thompson, the importance of the French Catholic college and number of French voters had already been diluted by the large numbers of newer and mostly Protestant arrivals. Taché was concerned with the loss of French Catholic influence in the university and the potential loss of investment in the Catholic college in case of dissolution of the new expansive institution. In addition to values already attached to the establishment, the increasing likelihood that federal land grants were forthcoming added to the importance and urgency of this issue.

Taché further explained to Thompson that, since the initial establishment of the university as a examining institution, “the question of making the University a teaching body by founding chairs in connection therewith, has been submitted and urged in the University council by representatives of the Protestant colleges.”<sup>259</sup> The archbishop clearly felt that because St. Boniface was the oldest institution of higher learning and one of the original three founding colleges in the university, in the event of dissolution, it should have a legitimate claim to a fair share of whatever may constitute the university assets. This dissolution, was seen as imminent as Taché continues,

“Now, we really anticipate that the scheme may be forced on us before very long, when we will, of course be compelled to sever our connection with the University. We have no idea yet under what form, and on what terms and conditions the separation may be effected. Whether we will be allowed to remain, in some shape or other, as an independent and separate branch of the University in regard to collation of degrees, or otherwise, we cannot foresee.”

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258 Statutes of Manitoba, 1877 (Winnipeg: Alexander Begg, Queen’s Printer, 1877), 67.

259 Letter from Taché to Thompson, May 15, 1886.

Recognizing that the university organization was a matter for the provincial legislative assembly and not within the authority of Thompson, Taché urged the prime minister to use his influence to attach some strings on potential federal action for the granting of land to the university. Thompson, while sympathetic to the concerns of the archbishop and the Catholics of Manitoba were a lawyer and a politician who was acutely aware of the limitations of the law as well as the available political leverage. In an effort to placate Taché, Thompson quickly responded with a description of his efforts in Ottawa and the difficulties involved with trying to meet the Archbishop's goals. Thompson explained that he had "given careful attention to this matter and recommended the Minister of the Interior to include a provision in the patent to the effect that if, at any time, the University should cease to be constituted in the manner provided in the act establishing it, the proceeds of the land sold as well as any lands remaining unsold shall be at the disposal of the Dominion Government."<sup>260</sup> To further explain his helplessness in this endeavor, Thompson went on to point out a striking feature in the enactment for the federal land grant which read "'an endowment to the University of Manitoba for its maintenance as a University capable of giving proper training in the high branches of education.' An examining body can hardly be said to give any training, and it looks as though some persons had been successful in getting a provision inserted in our statute in favor of a teaching university."

Taché's interest in the procedure to be followed in case of any dissolution is not as far-fetched as it may seem. Certainly, his statements may be seen as thinly veiled threats to withdraw Saint Boniface College from the university federation. Late in the decade of the 1880s, the Methodist sponsored Wesley College joined the others in the University but in 1938, consolidated with Manitoba College to form United College and they together withdrew from the University. United College later became the University of Winnipeg. Brandon College, a Baptist institution in Brandon, Manitoba, was founded in 1889 but was affiliated with McMaster University in Ontario. In 1938, the same year that Wesley and Manitoba Colleges departed from the University, Brandon College joined the University of Manitoba. Brandon College remained at its home campus in western Manitoba in spite of this affiliation just as

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<sup>260</sup> Letter from John Thompson to Archbishop Taché, June 6, 1889.

Saint Boniface kept its own campus at a separate Winnipeg location. So Taché's warnings about continued fluidity in the federation proved to be of considerable substance.

The Anglican Archbishop of Rupert's Land, Robert Machray, later wrote an encyclopedia article about the University in 1898. This essay supported most of what Taché had reported but with a somewhat different slant. More than two decades after the events of the 1870s, and a few years after the death of Taché, Machray was in a position to make benevolent statements. In describing the resolution of differences in the colleges' practices in curriculum and examination, the Anglican archbishop explained:

The very lovable rector of St. Boniface, Father Forget, suggested a plan in use in French Colleges in the east, but representatives of the English Colleges did not see that it would afford an adequate and reliable test of the knowledge of a subject. Finally, the English system was adopted, the representatives of St. Boniface courteously and loyally falling in with the majority.<sup>261</sup>

Anglican Archbishop Machray claimed that the origins of University Bill, Section 5, read "There shall be no professorship or other teacher ship in the University, but its function shall be limited to the examining of candidates for degrees in the several Faculties and for certificates of honor..." Later, according to Machray, and in agreement with Taché's account, the Preamble and Section 5 were amended in Committee of the Whole on February 16, 1877 by striking the words, "on the model of the University of London" and by adding, following "teacher ship" with the words "at present." Oddly, according to Machray, "...in the published English edition of the statute of that year, the words 'on the model of the University of London' were erroneously retained although the words 'at present' was correctly made..."

With the legislative blundering and apparent secrecy, some statements attributed to the French-Catholic attorney-general, Joseph Royal, added even more questions to the controversy. Royal was from Quebec where he was a lawyer and journalist. Arriving in Manitoba in 1870, he continued in the legal profession and immediately entered politics. He elected to the

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261 Robert Machray, "History of the University of Manitoba," in Hopkins, John Castell, ed., *Canada: An Encyclopaedia of the Country: History of Presbyterianism* (Toronto: Linscott Publishing, 1898), 258.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba for the riding of Saint Xavier West and soon served in a cabinet positions including attorney-general from 1876 to 1878.

The very English Protestant leaning *Weekly Free Press*, on February 17, 1877, quoted Royal's introduction of the university legislation as "The Bill provides for a University only to grant degrees and for graduating purposes, but it will not be a teaching University. The Bill however provided that hereafter Chairs may be attached and endowed." Machray reports that Royal later disputed this statement as published and claimed that the original bill did not contain any mention of attaching or endorsing chairs. Negative criticism of the operation of the legislative assembly is apparent as Machray writes, "The proceedings of the Legislature were however, so conducted at the time that there is nothing remarkable in an amendment not being noticed." Machray adds this interesting third-person observation:

The amendment does not seem to have been heard outside the House, for the Archbishop of Rupert's Land, [that is Machray himself] who intensely disliked the allusion to the University of London, would have rejoiced at it if he had known it.

The worries expressed by Taché and other Catholic Franco-Manitobans were well-founded. The land grant from the national government had been in the works for a number of years before the above series of letters between Archbishop Taché and Justice Minister Thompson. Only a year after the founding of the university, a plan had been hatched to appeal to the Dominion government for a land grant which could fund ongoing operational expenses. A Special Committee was formed, as universities are wont to do, to determine ways of meeting current expenses. This led the University Council to pass a resolution in 1878 that this Special Committee "be continued with power to bring this matter before the Dominion Government through the Local Government, and to secure the aid of those members of the Local Government now in Ottawa in order that a revenue adequate to the carrying on of the University may be obtained."<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Royal Commission, *Report of the Royal Commission of the University of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: James Hooper, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1910), 16. This is a report to the University Council by the Special Committee, later known as the Land Committee, January 7, 1880

This "Special Committee," with the new title of "Land Committee," reported on January 7, 1880 that "That they had an interview with the Provincial Government on the subject of securing a revenue for the University, and as a result of that interview they begged to recommend: --A petition to the Dominion Government for an endowment of certain lands then un-granted and unoccupied." Within two months of this report, the Land Committee had sent a petition to the Prime Minister, John A. MacDonald. Reference to the operation of the University as patterned after the University of London is abandoned as they point out to MacDonald that, "the Toronto University established on a somewhat similar basis to this, is maintained by the revenue or proceeds of certain land grants to it by the Government."<sup>263</sup>

To expand the purpose and financial basis of an institution established only months earlier for the purpose of examination and the granting of degrees for three small religion-based colleges into an expansive land-owning organization with a very different purpose has the appearance of runaway empire-building. That the chancellorship of this amalgamation of colleges was held by important Anglican clergymen from the founding in 1877 until the appointment of a layperson in 1934 is probably less surprising than it is telling indication of the decline of the importance of the French Catholic influence in education and politics in the province. When the long period of executive control passed from the Anglican clergy to a layperson, in 1934, it was then held by John Dafoe. Dafoe was the publisher of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, a newspaper with a long history of pronounced opposition to bilingualism. Governance of the University was conducted by the Council which elects the vice-chancellor and the chancellor who was appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. The Council was originally constituted of representatives from the three founding colleges, representatives of the Convocation, and two members appointed by the Board of Education. Soon, there were additional representative from the newer member colleges, Wesley College (Methodist), the Medical College, the Manitoba Agricultural College, and the College of Pharmacy.<sup>264</sup> This further diluted the influence of St. Boniface College and the French Catholic leadership and population.

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<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17. Petition is from Council of the University of Manitoba to Sir John A. MacDonald, March 4, 1880.  
<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

All of this preliminary work toward a funding source had taken place long before Taché's concerned correspondence with the Minister of Justice. During the 1881 visit of the Governor-General to the province, the University Council urged his support for a land grant similar to an earlier grant for common schools. The Dominion parliament voted, in 1884, to grant 150,000 acres of fair average quality land as an endowment for the University. The effort to bring this proposition to completion was continuing to work its way through the slow moving machinery of government. The proposal required that the University be capable of providing higher education for the province and the grant was to be held in trust until a plan was developed and approved by the University and the Dominion government. All of this preliminary work was underway during the decade approaching the 1890 banishment of French language from public education in Manitoba.<sup>265</sup>

The third person, besides Taché and Machray, who was extremely influential in the progress of education, especially higher education, in Manitoba was Presbyterian Rev. George Bryce. By 1904, when he wrote *Educational Reminiscences of One-Third Century in Winnipeg, 1871-1903*, he, like Bishop Machray, had an opportunity to commend the cooperation of the French Catholic leadership whose education proposals had been largely defeated by the growing English-speaking majority.

Although the introduction of Presbyterian sponsored education did not reach the Red River until 1870, Bryce applauds the efforts made and the opportunities for excellence at the Kildonan Presbyterian School. Here, he discovered that "The scholars were of the sturdy Highland type, for there were few of native blood in Kildonan."<sup>266</sup> The relatively late-arriving Scottish settlers were less inclined toward métissage. With pride, Bryce praised the futile efforts of Kildonan member of the new provincial legislature in 1871, John Sutherland, of trying to establish national schools from the beginning of provincial government. Bryce believed this effort failed because of the "people of Manitoba being unaccustomed to law or representative institutions." The establishment of parallel, Protestant and Catholic public schools was a case, as described by Bryce, of "putting new wine in an old bottle." The failure of progressive

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>266</sup> George Bryce. "Educational Reminiscences of One-Third Century in Winnipeg, 1871 to 1904" is a self-published pamphlet reprinted from *Manitoba Free Press*, November 19, 1904.

education changes by the legislature in the early years of the government is blamed on the upper legislative chamber, the Legislative Council, dubbed by Bryce as a House of Lords. In his description of the Council's seven members, Bryce tells his readers that "Two of the seven represented the Métis, and were little more than able to write their names, though respectable citizens." Not without some basis, the Presbyterian minister's description of the three original colleges was that they, "...represented not only religious bodies, but three races. St. Boniface was chiefly employed in educating the Métis; St. John's largely led the English natives; and Manitoba, the Scottish people of Kildonan."<sup>267</sup>

In another of Rev. Bryce's self-published pamphlets, often sent to acquaintances with Christmas greetings, he laments some of the conditions brought by progress. Fondly looking back on earlier times, he observed that

...the people had in their seclusion more time and more taste for books than are found at present within the reach of the telephone, the telegraph, and the railway.<sup>268</sup>

Unlike the accounts by Taché and Machray of the formation of the University, Bryce places special emphasis on the initial founding efforts of Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris. Morris is described as ambitious and wanted his legacy in the province to be a university. He was a graduate of Queen's College in Kingston, Ontario, and had been active in the workings of that institution. The Lieutenant Governor's proposal was apparently a surprise to Taché, Machray, and Bryce when it was brought up at a meeting of community leaders. The University Bill was then introduced by Joseph Royal in a seemingly regretful manner according to Bryce with the comment that "The government thinks the bill premature, but have been so repeatedly urged that they have brought it down."<sup>269</sup> Bryce makes no early mention of the two different versions of the act as far as being only for the purpose of examination. Instead he

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<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>268</sup> George Bryce. *The Inner History of Manitoba University*, a self-published pamphlet sent to acquaintances with Christmas greeting, 1900. It contained the text of his inaugural Address delivered in Convocation Hall, Manitoba College, Winnipeg, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1900.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

states that, “The act was framed with the plan of, for a time, having the university a mere examining and not a teaching body...” Later in his pamphlet, Bryce mentions that concerns by Saint Boniface over this issue caused an expensive delay in the federal land grant.<sup>270</sup>

The part played by the French Catholic College in university decision making was not large because of the other two original institutions held a plurality of power. This was even further diminished by the existence in the council delegates representing a convocation of all graduates of universities in Her Majesty’s dominions, who were residents of Manitoba, most of whom were English-speaking Protestants. Soon, seats on the council also contained representatives from additional member colleges, thereby further diminishing French Catholic influence. Although the increasingly dominate English Protestant majority was able to implant Ontarian practices of a teaching university and examination practices, the French managed to maintain the right to take examinations in French and teach in either language at Saint Boniface College.

The tactics used in the university issue were part of a general wish to make and keep Manitoba an English province. After the French language was banished from use in public schools in 1890 this constitutional right was only partially returned in a compromise in 1896. Once again, in 1916, French along with all languages other than English were outlawed in public schools. Saint Boniface College remained an island of French language and culture in Manitoba, helping to keep the language alive among the minority until, during the civil rights era of the late twentieth-century when the smoldering issue came once again to the fore.

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

## William Henry Harrison Beadle South Dakota's Grand Old Man

By Jean Elliott Rahja

William Henry Harrison Beadle was born in a log cabin in Indiana on January 1, 1838, the fourth child and first son of the family. He grew up in a forested region near the Wabash River in a log home built by his father.<sup>[1]</sup> His life was that of a farm boy helping his father cut wood and plant crops. He learned how to trap, hunt and fish at an early age. He went barefoot to school in a log school house under a master who taught in a subscription school, meaning the salaries of the teachers were paid by the students' parents.<sup>[2]</sup> He read classics such as Robinson Crusoe and Peter Parley stories. Sometimes he read to his mother while she worked at the spinning wheel. She offered him help when he came upon a new word he could not pronounce.<sup>[3]</sup>

As a young boy he watched his father build a flat boat each spring and load it with produce to sell in New Orleans. His father would return on a steamboat in late May, bringing home new books for the children to read. They were classics such as Pope's translation of Homer, Scott's Ivanhoe and Burn's poems.<sup>[4]</sup>

At the age of 19, his father offered him a 240-acre farm. He told his father that instead of a farm, he would like \$1,000 so he could attend the University of Michigan.<sup>[5]</sup> His father agreed and the raw-boned young man entered the university wearing clothing made from homespun fabric. When asked what his father's occupation was on the registration form, he wrote agriculturist. After four years, he received his degree in civil engineering.<sup>[6]</sup>

At his graduation ceremony, UM President Tappan chided him about when he was going to get married. Beadle said that if he ever did get married, he wanted the president to do the honors, and Tappan said he would.<sup>[7]</sup>

Two years later Beadle married Ellen S. Chapman, a young widow who had a small daughter, in Albion, Michigan. When President Tappan read Beadle's letter about the upcoming wedding to his philosophy class and announced there would be no class that day, the members of his class decided to follow Tappan and Beadle to the train station to give them a proper sendoff.<sup>[8]</sup>

When the Civil War broke out one month after he graduated, Beadle enlisted in the Union Army. He led the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Indiana Volunteers and drove the Confederate Army south. Lincoln soon promoted him to captain. Later, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel of the First

Michigan Sharp Shooters. For gallant and meritorious conduct in action, Lincoln made him colonel by brevet and later a brigadier-general.<sup>[9]</sup>

Beadle led the Sharpshooters through a battle in a severe blizzard in 1863. He continued on duty for several weeks and suffered from exposure. He was taken to the Naval Academy General Hospital unconscious and delirious with inflamed lungs. He had typhoid pneumonia. The doctor told his nurse that he would not live through the night. She asked if she could apply a blister on the back of his neck. He told her it would do no harm if it gave satisfaction to her. By five o'clock the next morning, Beadle was better and had his first night of peaceful sleep in some time. He credited the nurse for his survival.<sup>[10]</sup>

Beadle was transferred from the Sharpshooters on June 13, 1864 to the Veteran's Reserve Corps as a major and was assigned duty in Washington, D. C. On March 2, 1865 Beadle received orders to select 300 men of his regiment and report for duty on Inauguration Day to the Senate sergeant at arms and they should act as guards in and around the U.S Capitol until after the inauguration of Lincoln was completed. He stood a few feet from President Lincoln when he gave his second inaugural address. "With malice toward none; with charity for all."<sup>[11]</sup>

Just six weeks later, General Beadle accompanied Lincoln's funeral train to Springfield, Illinois. A silver star from the flag that covered Lincoln's casket was given to Beadle for his loyal service and remains a family heirloom.<sup>[12]</sup>

When General Beadle arrived at Wilmington, Kentucky, there were 1,500 cases of small pox there. The vaccination made him ill. This was followed by an attack of malaria. He asked to resign from the service but the need for experienced officers kept him on duty until he was mustered out as a brigadier general in March 1866. He was honorably discharged at the age of 28 with five years of military experience.<sup>[13]</sup>

Beadle returned to the University of Michigan to study for a law degree. An address by John A. Pierce had a profound influence on Beadle. Pierce believed in the Common School which meant the education of every individual. He believed that rich and poor students should be educated together. He said that free schools should be established and maintained by public lands set aside for that purpose.<sup>[14]</sup>

Beadle practiced law in Evansville, Indiana and Boscobel, Wisconsin for two years, but he was anxious to move west. In March of 1869, President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Beadle as surveyor general for the U.S. in the Territory of Dakota.<sup>[15]</sup> He, along with his wife, step-daughter and their young daughter arrived in Yankton in April. He was met by his predecessor who gave him a tour of the vast prairies of the territory. He thought to himself that as surveyor general he must make sure that land be set aside for the education of children within each township. He became familiar with all regions of Dakota Territory. He traveled on horseback and walked to visit with settlers about his ideas for public education.<sup>[16]</sup>

General Beadle remembered the words of Pierce and the teachings of a former teacher named Miss Tucker who asked her students to pledge that they would educate themselves and everybody within their realm of influence. He also remembered the words of his father who told two men he hired who did not own land, that he was willing to pay taxes so their children might have an equal opportunity for an education. General Beadle continued his duties as surveyor general for nearly four years. He wrote the *Codes of Dakota*,<sup>[17]</sup> an early version of state law which later became part of the state constitution. He was elected the following year to the territorial legislature, where he secured their adoption.

Three books written by Beadle are *Life in Utah, Geography, History, and Resources of Dakota*, and *Natural Method of Teaching Geography*.<sup>[18]</sup>

Beadle was appointed by Territorial Governor William A. Howard to serve as territorial superintendent of public instruction.<sup>[19]</sup> Beadle said if he accepted the position, his aim would be to establish a township system of schools and sections 16 and 36 would be reserved for education and no school lands could be sold for less than 10 dollars per acre. He was superintendent for more than six years. The school lands were being trespassed upon by settlers which became a constant problem. Some people were demanding the sale of school land. Beadle spent his salary, his personal money, and earned additional money surveying to pay for his crusade. Beadle traveled to Washington, D.C. to seek help and advice from President Harrison.<sup>[20]</sup> Finally, trespassers were tried by U.S. judges and that put a stop to much of the problem. Today, the income from the sale or lease of school lands and accrued interest has risen as well.

When General Beadle was appointed to the office of territorial superintendent of education in 1879, he urged the establishment of two normal schools at the earliest possible time. He recommended one in the northern part of the territory and one in the southern. If the territory was later divided, each half would have a normal school.<sup>[21]</sup>

In 1889, six states were being considered to join the Union. Washington, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota were admitted first, with Wyoming and Idaho admitted the following year. The movement for the conservation of school lands emanated from South Dakota. General Beadle discussed his ideas about school lands with former Surveyor General William Tripp. The plan called for the proceeds from sections 16 and 36 of each township to be used for education and has been referred to as Beadle's Magnificent Obsession.<sup>[22]</sup> Beadle took it upon himself to establish the endowment lands for permanent benefit of the schools. Seven new states followed this plan for funding education in their state governments.

On February 9, 1889 General Beadle was hired as superintendent of the Indian Industrial School at Chemena, near Salem, Oregon.<sup>[23]</sup> He moved his family to Oregon. He visited with some of his South Dakota friends when he was in Washington, D. C. while interviewing officials of the Indian Service. He told his Dakota friends that he was unhappy with his Oregon position.

General Beadle was subsequently hired to be president of the State Normal School in Madison in August of 1889. He remained in that position for 16 years. He found that much of what he learned while working in Oregon became useful to him as president of the State Normal School at Madison.<sup>[24]</sup>

Beadle's wife passed away in Chicago following surgery in 1897.<sup>[25]</sup> Afterwards, he devoted himself to his work to ward off loneliness. Their daughters were grown by this time.

General Beadle was invited to attend the graduation ceremony at the University of Michigan in 1902 where he was awarded the honorary doctor of law degree for his impressive work in Dakota Territory.<sup>[26]</sup>

As president of Madison Normal he did not have a secretary, so he wrote his own correspondence in longhand. He was also teaching history. He asked for a year's leave of absence which was granted but without salary. He knew he could not live without his salary so he did not leave. A friend encouraged him to take a vacation which he did. However, the students circulated a petition asking for his return. His staff also requested his return to campus. In 1905 he stepped down from being president to being professor of history and served in that position until 1912 when he retired.

General Beadle received several honors after his retirement from Madison Normal College. He was asked to speak at the ceremony for the placing of the South Dakota Capitol cornerstone. He served as president of the South Dakota Education Association. He became known as South Dakota's Grand Old Man.<sup>[27]</sup>

General Beadle left a leather trunk at Madison State College when he retired in 1912. This trunk is now locked in the vault at the college and contains documents signed by President Abraham Lincoln, President Ulysses S. Grant, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and several letters of commendation for meritorious acts while in the service of his country during the Civil War. Another treasure is an old fashioned buffalo gun that is four feet long and weighs 30 pounds. The barrel is two inches across with a half-inch bore.<sup>[28]</sup>

The SDEA was started by Beadle in 1884 and he was elected president the first year. His purpose was to protect the permanent school fund until the state assumed that responsibility. In 1909, he was elected president for the fourth time. He was honored by the SDEA for preserving school lands in South Dakota making it possible for every child in the state to receive a free public education.<sup>[29]</sup>

It was resolved by the SDEA that a life-size marble statue of General Beadle be placed at the South Dakota Capitol in Pierre as a permanent memorial by the people.<sup>[30]</sup> School children, teachers, county superintendents and others contributed and more money was collected than needed. Henry Daniel Webster of Westport, Connecticut, a former South Dakotan, offered to create the statue at cost. Webster came to Sioux Falls and made the clay model of General Beadle before carving the statue in Tennessee bond marble. He charged \$2,500, leaving a surplus of almost \$2,000. The balance was used to give a small monthly payment to General Beadle who received no pension after he retired.

The statue was dedicated in the Capitol Rotunda on November 28, 1911 with a massive crowd filling the rotunda, halls and corridors. At the conclusion of Governor Robert Vessey's address, step-daughter Kathryn Marian French and daughter Mae Beadle Frink pulled back the American flags that draped the statue.<sup>[31]</sup> More than 2,000 friends stood in line to shake the hand of South Dakota's Grand Old Man.

A bronze replica of Beadle's marble statue has been placed in the National Statuary Hall in Washington, D. C. A plaster caster from Chicago came to Pierre to make a mold from the marble statue. Partitions were erected around the statue so that he could set up his station of

work which took one week. The bronze replica of the statue was then completed by an artist in Sioux Falls. It was unveiled at the SDEA's annual convention on November 21, 1937. From there it was delivered to the National Statuary Hall.<sup>[32]</sup>

A third statue was erected in 1937 during the Beadle County Centennial by the Madison State University Alumni Association.<sup>[33]</sup> Dr. R. S. Westaby, who raised funds for the project, was a student at the college when General Beadle was president. It is a duplicate of the bronze statue placed in Statuary Hall. The granite base came from a quarry in Jasper, Minnesota. Professor Goff – who was a speaker at the dedication – was a member of the faculty when General Beadle was president. Mae Beadle Frink also participated in the dedication ceremony.

In October, 1913 General Beadle made the decision to reside in the Soldier's Home in Hot Springs, South Dakota. Two years later he traveled to San Francisco to visit his daughter and her family. He died there after surgery at age 77, on September 13, 1915.<sup>[34]</sup>

Each year the Commission of School and Public Lands gives approximately \$12 million to school districts and endowed institutions. The money is generated from the revenues of grazing, minerals, oil and gas leases, interest on the Common School Permanent Fund, and interest on land sale contracts.<sup>[35]</sup>

Beadle's Magnificent Obsession lives on, supporting the education of all South Dakotans.

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## The Roots of Violence against Native American Women

Michelle Ritter

Leslie Ironroad was staying with a friend near McLaughlin, South Dakota, on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. Ironroad left her friend's house for a party and never returned. Her friend located a badly beaten Ironroad at a hospital in Bismarck, North Dakota. Barely able to produce her statement, Ironroad explained that several men had "locked her in a bathroom, where she swallowed diabetes pills she found in the cabinet, hoping that if she was unconscious the men would leave her alone. The next morning, someone found her on the bathroom floor and called an ambulance." She had been violently raped, perhaps several times, and was dead a week later (Sullivan, 2007). The incident was never investigated. Most women, me included, think of rape as something that happens to "other" people, never to us, ourselves. Unfortunately, "young women on the reservation live their lives in anticipation of being raped . . . they talk about, 'How will I survive my rape?' as opposed to not even thinking about it. We shouldn't have to live our lives that way" (Graef, 2014).

According to 2008 statistics, American Indian and Alaska Native women are raped or sexually assaulted at a rate 2.5 times higher than that of women in the United States overall (Subia BigFoot & Willmon-Hague, 2008, p.1). These figures are consistent for Native women living on or living off the reservation (Bachman, et al., 2008, p.33). As compared to White, African American and Asian American women, sexual assault incidents against indigenous women are more likely to involve hitting and/or the presence of a weapon and alcohol and/or drugs (Ibid, p.37). Not only are Native women more likely to be raped, and raped in a more violent way, Native women are the only ethnicity more likely to be raped by an offender of a different race. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey data from 1992-2005, 57% of rapes committed against Native American women had a white offender (Ibid, p.38). Yet 33%

of the rapes with Native American victims have offenders of “other” races, which are defined by the NCVS as American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Asian Americans (Ibid, p.38). The data, showing high rates of both non-native to native and native to native rape can be traced to behaviors and attitudes initiated and perpetuated by colonization.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the theory that attitudes of colonization are a chief factor in high rates of rape against Native women. Throughout history, colonialism has influenced attitudes of whites towards Native women and the attitudes of Native men towards Native women. Driven by colonial attitudes, several major events in history have significantly affected Native populations, including the Boarding School eras and the sterilization movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These events perpetuated the colonial attitude that whites had the right to control Native peoples, and provides a partial explanation for indigenous rapes with white offenders. Although these events were predominantly propelled by dominant (white) culture, decades of forced assimilation and colonization have filtered into the Native perspective, eroding the traditional barriers that Native culture had against sexual assault and rape against its own women.

### *Colonization*

The roots of the attitudes and beliefs that have brought about the startling rates of rape of Native women lie in colonization. Brooke Olson describes colonization as “the steam-roller of white ‘progress’” (2002, p.2). The United States used violence to colonize and dominate the Native peoples who called this land their home. The perspectives that propelled colonization were based on “ethnocentric assumptions and stereotypes of Native people” that allowed whites to justify the removal of “Indians from their cultural landscapes, confine them on reservations, eviscerate their language and culture . . . and, in some instances, simply massacre them” in order to make way for the progress of dominant culture (Ibid, p.2). The issue is not simply about the attitudes of colonization, but also about the way colonization was accomplished. It is “not simply that violence against women happens during colonization, but that the colonial process is itself structured by sexual violence” (Smith & Ross, 2004, p.1).

This structure of sexual violence has profound implications for women in Lakota culture. For Lakotas, the women of the tiyospaye are responsible for raising the children. Because of

this, Lakota women are the chief method for passing on culture and tradition to the next generation. In efforts to squash Native culture and ensure that Native Americans were a race on their way to extinction, colonization attacked women: the bearers of culture and bearers of children. The women ensure the continuation of a people through childbirth and in the case of the Lakota and other Native tribes, ensure the continuation of a culture. Through intermarriages, rape and sexual assaults, white men created a stereotype for Native women as an object of conquest.

Taking advantage of a native woman also involved political and economic conquest through strategic marriage arrangements. A native woman was a game-piece; her body, regarded with indifference: "Indian bodies have become marked as inherently 'dirty' through the colonial process. They are then considered sexually violable and 'rape able' and by extension, Native lands become marked as inherently invade able" (Smith & Ross, 2004, p.1). Such heinous action was justifiable in colonial minds because "the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty does not count" (Ibid, p.1). These actions are seen in both the white settlers and soldiers that won the west for the United States.

As men moved west ahead of their families to establish themselves, many took up with Indian women either in sexual affairs or second marriages, sometimes for their own pleasure and other times to create an alliance with an Indian tribe in power. When word came that a man's family was traveling west to join him, he would leave his Indian partner and go back to his white family. It was not uncommon for a single white settler, new to the lonely prairies and in search of some tender loving care, to take up with an Indian mistress. One early settler comments: "During early days an Indian mistress was installed in nearly every cabin. One after another, however, as they found opportunity to procure wives of their own race from distance places, these dusky sweethearts were discarded" (Crawford Country, Wisconsin History, n.d.). It is important to note that interracial marriage was, in the context of history at this time, a practice not unique to white men and native women. "In colonial Mexico, Spanish conquistadores married Indian women because there were no Spanish women to marry" (Mullin, 2014).

Sometimes genuine love motivated these relationships. Other times, to benefit themselves or their people, the desire for political or economic power motivated a marriage. For example, Joseph Renville (who was part Sioux himself, although associated himself heavily with dominant culture as evidenced by his Catholic wedding) married a Sioux woman and through that marriage was able to work his way up through the tribe to become a “chief among the Sioux. Probably, however, the paternal influence accounts for his interest in fur-trading” (Ackermann, 1931, p.233). Renville, although he very well could have married for love, also was able to gain entrance into this particular tribe through marriage and increase his status and power. In the minds of men similar to Renville, the Native woman was an exploitable object, used to gain power within the tribe; power which led to manipulation and further exploitation.

Some American soldiers continued this manipulation of Native women. Gary Clayton Anderson hints at the predatory attitudes held against Native women as he describes men leaving their camp, “some perhaps were angry with the way government soldiers treated their people, especially women . . .” (1986, p.25-26). In 1982, Mystique released a video game for the Atari 2600 called *Custer’s Revenge*, or as it was later marketed by Playaround, *Westward Ho*. The game depicts a simulated rape of an Indian woman. This does not go to say that a video game is a solid indicator of what happened in history. However, the scenario of an Indian woman’s rape by an American soldier is consistent with historical inferences about soldiers’ behavior towards Indian women, much of which is discussed in a “hush-hush” sort of tone in our history books. Regardless of the exact historical accuracy of *Custer’s Revenge*, it shows just how deep the colonial perspective runs in our country’s development that it persists, even hundreds of years after the fact, as unjustifiable discriminatory attitudes are held against Native Americans even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In order to put the behavior of white soldiers into perspective, it is helpful to examine the behavior of native warriors in the same period. Merril D. Smith’s [Encyclopedia of Rape](#) (2004) examines the presence of rape throughout the history of the United States. He notes the differences American Indians and colonists had on the subject, noting native men rejected raped as a policy, though Europeans and their descendants used it.

*While colonial Americans originally feared that Native American men would rape Anglo-American women during wartime, by the eighteenth century they believed that Native American men were unlikely to rape white female captives. Many Native Americans believed that sexual relations would weaken a warrior's powers, so would refrain from all intercourse (including rape) during war. Some Native American leaders had repeatedly complained, however, that Anglo-American traders and travelers had sexually assaulted Native American women, but few of these cases were prosecuted in American courts (p. 180-181).*

The manipulation of Indian bodies manifests itself in centuries after what we would call the "colonial era," bringing us into the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries where assimilationist policy prided itself on a self-righteous duty to civilize the Indian.

#### *The Boarding School Eras*

The attitudes that moved colonization forward persisted after westward expansion in the form of assimilation. Education was the primary method of assimilating Native Americans to dominant culture "in both the secular and church-run schools the federal government required Native children to attend from the late 1800s to the 1970s" (Woodard, 2011). Forced acculturation was implemented through strict rules banning Native dress and appearance, languages, and religion. The Boarding School experience proved traumatic for Native American students as well as their families. Children were sent to school less for the purpose of education and more for the purpose of acculturation, boasting the motto: "kill the Indian to save the man." The motto implies a rather violent destruction of Indian culture which unfortunately was enforced at many Indian schools where the majority of children experienced some type of abuse whether it be physical, sexual, or emotional, "as well as being victims of ethnocide" (Olson, 2002, p.3). Here again we see the same attitude in dominant culture that allows the manipulation of Indian bodies in terms of sexual and physical abuse.

The Holy Rosary Mission was founded in 1888 on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota "to help in the religious conversion of the Oglala Lakota" (Woodard, 2011). According to

nuns staffing the school at Holy Rosary, the Indian children were better behaved than the white children the nuns had previously taught. However, “corporal punishment was meted out regularly at Holy Rosary . . . and a primary goal of the school was to cut the children off from their parents, their language and their culture” (Ibid). If the children did return to their families after completing their education, they returned as a different person, a [stranger] to their own people (Ibid). Although those experiencing some form of abuse during their time at an Indian boarding school most commonly tell of emotional or physical abuses, in both the United States and Canada, hundreds of claims have come forward revealing that sexual abuse was also a common occurrence.

*In South Dakota, 100-some former students of the state’s half-dozen so-called Indian Missions have sued the Catholic Dioceses of Sioux Falls and Rapid City since 2003. They’ve also made claims against the religious orders that ran the mission schools and Blue Cloud Abbey, in Marvin, South Dakota, which provided priests and is the final resting place of several alleged predators. They charge that priests, brothers, nuns and lay employees at these institutions raped, sodomized and molested them, often for years (Woodard, 2011).*

In Lakota Woman (1990), Mary Crow Dog details her, her mother’s, and her grandmother’s experiences at boarding school. Besides dealing with corporal punishments such as bare swats, “there was this too to contend with—sexual harassment. We complained to the student body. The nuns said we just had a dirty mind” (p.39-40). Aside from the exact nature of the abuses, we must look deeper at what exactly justified such widespread abuse of Native American children. Going back to colonization, if white men saw Indian bodies as “dirty” and “less than,” using traumatic forms of abuse is “justifiable” because the purpose of boarding schools was to better Indian children by assimilating them. The attitudes of colonization possess such longevity and power that these abuses were justified for 170 years! Not only did the Boarding School Era reinforce and prolong colonial attitudes held by whites, but it also created a struggle between those who are more Indian and those who are less Indian that continues today.

*In a school like this there is always a lot of favoritism. At St. Francis it was strongly tinged with racism. Girls who were near-white, who came from what the nuns called 'nice families,' got preferential treatment. They waited on the faculty and got to eat ham or eggs and bacon in the morning. They got the easy jobs while the skins, who did not have the right kind of background—myself among them—always wound up in the laundry room sorting out ten bushel baskets of dirty boys' socks every day. Or we wound up scrubbing the floors and doing all the dishes. The school therefore fostered fights and antagonism between the whites and breeds, and between breeds and skins (Crow Dog, 1990, p.38).*

With the beginnings of intermarriage during the colonial era, the boarding school experience brought the children of both inter-racial marriages and full-blooded families together into a common space, allowing us to critically examine the differences in the way breeds and skins were treated. As Crow Dog explains, the more white your skin was, the better you were treated. This prevents a common Native American identity from emerging and instead encourages resentment and anger.

With so much of the Native population suffering horrible abuses, we must not only consider the immediate implications, but also the effects of the Boarding School Era on generations birthed by the survivors. Boarding School abuse victims suffered immediate effects such as “depression, shame, emotional illness, rape trauma, substance abuse, suicide, and homicide” (Olson, 2002, p.3). One former student named Howard Wanna describes his experience at a boarding school called Tekakwitha in Sisseton, South Dakota: “Tekakwitha was a very quiet place. You’d think with all those children, there’d be noise and laughing. But so many of us were being abused and simply didn’t talk. We were too frightened. It was like a horror movie in which people walk by each other but can’t communicate” (Woodard, 2011). Wanna believes the Catholic Church which ran many of the boarding schools, is to blame for the chemical dependency and suicide many former students experienced due to their abuse during their schooling. Mary Crow Dog explicitly discusses these experiences in her autobiography.

Native children attending boarding schools faced long periods of separation from their families, some never returning home until the end of their schooling. If we apply the Gender Oppression Model to such circumstances, we can see why, sociologically, this causes trauma in both boys and girls. When children endure a separation from their mother, they repress their ambivalence towards their mother. For boys, this continues into adulthood and manifests as a drive to control and dominate (giving us insight into why some men who endured boarding school grow up to abuse women). For girls, their repression manifests in adulthood by giving into control, essentially submitting to another's control over them (Swart, 2014).

It is important to remember that this abuse of Native Americans occurred over many generations since Indian boarding schools existed from 1800 until the 1970s. The effects of such abuses stem down through the generations including the present-day, a generation that did not directly experience the abuse at boarding schools. However, abuse and its effects are often cyclical in nature, creating lasting effects. Wanna explains how some of the immediate effects suffered by Indian boarding school students such as substance abuse, suicide, and depression continue in present-day Native generations who were born after the Boarding School Era: "It's the result of how we elders were treated as children—an effect that continues through the generations" (Woodard, 2011).

A less obvious but perhaps one of the most important implications of the Boarding School Era is the breakdown of the traditional Native family structure: the *tiyospaye*. The *tiyospaye* is the center of traditional Native culture. Sending Native children to boarding schools, if not assimilated the students, at the very least destroyed the notion of a *tiyospaye*. Mary-Catherine Renville, another student from Tekakwitha explains how the school "took away our sense of belonging to anyone, our opportunities to develop relationship" (Woodard, 2011). The *tiyospaye* was the source of stability, provision, education, culture, and connectivity in Native American culture. Taking Native children out of the *tiyospaye* and educating them in dominant culture and curriculum, makes them strangers to their own family, undermining the traditional familial and societal structure, thereby causing the breakdown of Native American societies. Generations of people who were educated at Indian Boarding Schools are thought of as the "lost generation" which "refers to . . . generations that grew up in militaristic institutions

where they learned physical punishment and their 'place' in the American social order, which was the lower strata of the wage labor force" (Olson, 2002, p.3).

### *Sterilization*

A third theory that allows us to examine the roots of violence against Native American women is sterilization. The sterilization of Native women is directly linked to their economic position in the lower class. "As capitalism and industrialization have expanded, so too has international interest in fertility control of 'lower-class' people" (Carpio, 2004, p.40).

Sterilization is a form of systematic abuse as well as other "perpetuated injustices" that are a result of "the ramifications of colonialism" that have oppressed Native Americans (Ibid, p.41).

Between the 1920s and 1970s, "the federally funded Indian Health Service (IHS, then run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)" surgically sterilized Native American women "usually without their knowledge or consent" (Moore, 2008, n.p.). According to a study by Women of All Red Nations (WARN), "as many as 42 percent of all American Indian women of childbearing age had, by that point [1974] been sterilized without their consent" (Ibid). It is clear that the Sterilization Movement was a continuation of colonization: "The state and mainstream U.S. society justify themselves in the encroachment upon the private lives of Native women by assuming control over their right to make their own decisions concerning their lives and their bodies" (Carpio, 2004, p.41). Smith & Ross (2004) describe the sterilization of Native women as a continuation of a "colonizers . . . [attack] on the reproductive capabilities of Native women" (p.2). The mantra of the past, "kill the Indian and save the man," has been replaced by efforts to get rid of Native Americans in general, giving up on assimilation and instead working to keep Indians as a people from continuing (Mullin, 2014).

Both Sterilization and the Boarding School Era reinforce the power and control of dominant culture over Native peoples in the United States. The traumatic and horrendous wrongdoings of each movement focus on the abuse of Indian bodies. "It is through the constant assaults upon our bodies that colonizers have attempted to eradicate our sense of Indian identity" (Smith & Ross, 2004, p.1). The cycle of abuse continues in the rape of Native women by white men. However, the implications of widespread abuse can also give us insight into the situations of native-to-native rape.

Colonization and its manifestation in both the Boarding School Era and the Sterilization Movement have had enormous effects on Native culture and society. In traditional Native culture, men become men by assuming the role of a warrior; it is essential to one's identity as a man (providing the motivation for so many Native American men to join the armed services today). As Native Americans reluctantly moved onto reservations and battles between whites and natives became political rather than physical, the need for a traditional warrior fell away. What option does this leave for a boy to be a man in traditional Native American culture? How does a man gain and assert his power? Allow me to divulge a tidbit of sociological theory that might shed some light on this situation. Carol Gilligan describes the unique power that lies in a woman's reproductive abilities, a power that spiritually connects her to the natural world; in essence, femininity is spiritual in itself (Swart, 2014). However, in native culture, men have to continually prove their spirituality through traditional ceremonies such as a Sweat or a Sun Dance. Forced attempts at assimilation especially the Boarding School experience have repressed these cultural practices in modern-day generations. This is not to say that traditional native ceremonies are dead; Wounded Knee II and the Ghost Dance movement have proven otherwise. But as time has passed, fewer Native Americans are practicing these traditional ceremonies.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) is an example of a modern-day warrior society for Native American men. At Wounded Knee in 1973, AIM joined the siege with guns and powers of intimidation. However, it was the women of the movement who said "go ahead and make your stand at Wounded Knee. If you men won't do it, you can stay here and talk for all eternity and we women will do it" (Crow Dog, 1990, p.124). It was the women who propelled the movement forward, confirming an old Cheyenne saying: "A nation is not dead until the hearts of its women are on the ground" (Ibid, p.80). Wounded Knee represents not just the survival of women but also marks a significant shift in power, which coincides with an identity struggle. Am I a traditional Native American, or am I willing to blend into dominant culture?

Mary Crow Dog explains how certain details of traditional culture have remained while others have faded away, resulting in contradictions within present-day native culture. ". . . when a young girl had her first period, it was announced to the whole village . . . and her family

gave her a big feast in honor of the event, giving away valuable presents and horses to celebrate her having become a woman. . .” (Ibid, p. 66). Today, men are “still traditional enough to want no menstruating women around. But the big honoring feast at a girl’s first period they dispense with. For that they are too modern . . . The feast is gone, only the distaste has remained.” (Ibid, p. 67). Men have been selective in deciding which parts of traditional culture to continue, revealing a bias against women that keeps the power in the hands of men. “It is not that a woman during her ‘moontime’ is considered unclean, but she is looked upon as being ‘too powerful.’ According to our old traditions a woman during her period possesses a strange force which could render a healing ceremony ineffective” (Ibid, p.67). Women are powerful: they possess a spiritual connection through reproduction and play a vital role in the continuation of a people both physically and culturally. “There is a curious contradiction in Sioux society. The men pay great lip service to the status women hold in the tribe” (Ibid, p. 65). But these men do not follow this “lip service” with appropriate action. As men have lost many of the traditional avenues for gaining power, women present a threat. Raping a woman is a way for a man to take control of her reproductive capabilities and render her powerless by taking advantage of her sexually.

A unique tension has also arisen between full- and mixed-blood Native Americans. “Two factors play a role in the construction of these ethnic social identities. Given the association with blood, biology is the more prominent and seemingly natural component. However, it is the second factor, a person’s cultural behavior (economic, social, political, and religious), that is often more determinative of which ethnic identity Lakota’s ascribe to a particular individual” (Pickering, 2000, p.82). Furthermore, this division within tribes causes unique tensions that pit the full-bloods and mixed-blood against each other. These tensions are present in economic, social, and political behavior. “A popular view within the reservation communities is that mixed-bloods get all the wage jobs and full-bloods have fewer opportunities. This internal sense of ethnic discrimination fosters social tensions over the survival of oneself, one’s immediate family, and one’s broader community” (Ibid, p.86).

Although crime reports do not record the blood-status of the victim or offender, when 33% of rapes against native women are committed by either native or Asian men, it is a worthy

notion to consider that some of the native-to-native rapes arise out of the tensions between full-bloods and mixed-bloods. "Rapes on the reservations are a big scandal. The victims are mostly full-blood girls, too shy and afraid to complain" (Ibid, p.68). Here, Mary Crow Dog is referring to rapes committed by white men, especially police officers. But it is valid to consider the possibility that some of these full-blood girls are being raped by native men, most specifically, mixed-blood men. Again, little crime data exists to support this hypothesis; however, it is a notion worthy of further research.

With 33% of Native American women enduring rape at some point, even multiple times in their life, awareness and action is critical. Recognizing the roots of the problem is essential to crafting a solution. The attitudes inspired by colonization have endured centuries and still exist in dominant culture, as well as infiltrating the view natives have of themselves and each other. The Boarding School Era and the Sterilization Movement have kept these discriminatory attitudes alive and have created tensions within native populations that only make the problem worse.

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## **Beneath the Minnesota N(ice): Criminal Identity, the Plains, and Popular Culture**

Darcie Rives-East

A comparison of two images of Great Plains folk legends Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, one from the Coen brothers' 1997 film *Fargo* and one from the 2014 FX television series of the same name, yields striking and illuminative results. *Fargo*, the series, set mostly in Bemidji, Minnesota, incorporates the actual statues of the characters that reside in that city, and these representations reflect the good-natured characters from the well-known stories of the settler era. However, the Coen brothers' *Fargo*, set primarily in Brainerd, Minnesota, includes statues constructed specifically for the 1997 film itself.<sup>i</sup> Here, we confront a menacing, maniacal Bunyan, who "towers portentously over the town of Brainerd with its axe murderer stance and mad, glaring eyes."<sup>ii</sup> The film deliberately establishes this image to underscore its theme that beneath the stereotype of Minnesota nice, like some shadowy leviathan below seemingly placid, ice-covered waters, lurks a dark, deep capacity for violence. This idea is illustrated by the film's outwardly innocuous anti-hero Jerry Lundegaard, a car salesman who has his own wife kidnapped for money, or, in the television series, by insurance salesman Lester Nygaard, also deceptively harmless, who bludgeons his nagging wife to death in their Bemidji basement.

These images of Bunyan emphasize that two Plains identities co-exist: one that is most often portrayed in popular culture and one that is not. The non-threatening Bunyan of the *Fargo* television series is the image most Americans have of those who reside not only in

Minnesota, but in the Great Plains as a whole. The stereotype of “Minnesota nice” is one that is applied across the region. Indeed, many plains cities and towns, such as Sioux Falls or Omaha, are often considered in American popular culture as morally upstanding communities in which to live and raise a family. They are ostensibly free from the usual crime and violence that plagues other regions or metropolitan areas. American popular culture is quick to capitalize on this image; for instance, NBC’s series *The Blacklist* is but one of many over the years to telegraph to the audience a main character’s inherent virtue by noting that she was raised in Nebraska. But, as Bunyan in the Coen brothers’ *Fargo* makes clear, the Plains has an alter-ego: a long history of criminality and violence that often goes unacknowledged in our American popular culture. It is this aspect that the film version of *Fargo* understands in its depiction of Paul Bunyan as an ax-wielding maniac. The tension, frisson, and draw of both *Fargo* the film and *Fargo* the television series is this discrepancy between the American cultural perception of the Plains (as well as the Plains’ view of itself) and the violent, criminal actions of the texts’ Midwestern characters.

This paper seeks to remind us of the history and persistence of this alter-ego of the Great Plains and to argue that the Plains’ criminal identity has its roots in the very inception of the states that make up this region. This paper argues that the image of a bucolic “Heartland” is a narrative that is not only pleasing, but necessary for American identity. The notion of a space within the US that is relatively free of crime and that embodies values of family, hard work, and community apparently lost elsewhere is essential in maintaining the myth that these values are what constitute the true American character, its “heart” (and hence why, every election cycle, politicians converge on Iowa to outdo one another in portraying themselves as

loyal to these tenets). However, in order to maintain this function, the reality of the Plains and its history of violence and criminality must be forgotten in a cultural amnesia that erases brutal acts of the past.

If we force ourselves to remember and confront this history, what might first come to our attention are so-called “true crimes,” that is, particularly heinous murders, assaults, or heists in the annals of criminal history. Some of the first and most infamous American mass murders occurred in the Great Plains: namely, the Clutter family murders in Holcomb, Kansas in 1959, famously memorialized by Truman Capote in his 1966 “nonfiction novel” *In Cold Blood*, and the 1958 spree killings committed by Charles Starkweather and his girlfriend, Caril Ann Fugate, in Lincoln, Nebraska and in Wyoming, which were later fictionalized in Terence Malick’s 1973 film *Badlands*. In some ways, these texts, and the crimes they portray, function, like *Fargo*, as sensational material because they represent extreme violence erupting in a region where such things are not supposed to happen. However, Capote himself draws attention to the connection between this 20<sup>th</sup> century violence and an older Plains criminality. Capote initially describes Holcomb as a place where “[l]ike the waters of the river, like the motorists on the highway, and like the yellow trains streaking down the Santa Fe tracks, drama, in the shape of exceptional happenings, had never stopped there.”<sup>iii</sup> And yet, Capote later acknowledges that in the days of white settlement of the Kansas territory, Holcomb and its more populous neighbor, Garden City, “was once a rather raucous frontier town”<sup>iv</sup> like nearby infamous Dodge City, home to gunslingers such as Bat Masterson, Luke Short, and Wyatt Earp.

In this way, Capote reminds us that Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, who drove through Kansas to kill a farmer, his wife, and their son and daughter for a safe full of money (which

turned out not to exist), and Starkweather and Fugate who, fed up with dead-end jobs and dead-end lives, murdered 11 people,<sup>v</sup> were a continuation and an outgrowth of earlier brutality and lawlessness in the Great Plains as white settlers began to occupy the area. However, outlaws of the “Wild West” have, like the mythical Paul Bunyan, become folk heroes in American culture. Why do we romanticize turn of the century outlaws of the Plains when their actions were in many ways no less deadly and violent than those of Smith, Hickock, Starkweather, and Fugate? Indeed, both pairs killed, to use Capote’s phrase, in cold blood, but all were primarily driven by a desire for money, as were their outlaw predecessors. It further seems strange that such acts shocked a nation, given that the Plains are a region celebrated in American mythology for its once lawless reputation.

One answer is that modern violence and criminality in the Plains today stands as a refutation of that other great American narrative, the myth of progress. This narrative holds that our society keeps moving towards a more enlightened and peaceful existence while eschewing its brutal and less civilized past. Romanticizing the outlaw of the past allows us to believe that this quality of American identity is no longer with us. The violence and brutality of the “Old West” is enjoyed and chuckled at as if it were a rowdy adolescent, even if the consequences were at the time deadly serious. For instance, it is told as a great yarn today that John Dillinger and his gang knocked off the Security National Bank and Trust in Sioux Falls in 1934, even though they shot and severely wounded a policeman in the process.<sup>vi</sup> However, it is not so welcome to remind ourselves that the crime rate in Sioux Falls has increased dramatically in the past few years<sup>vii</sup>; or that sex-trafficking is prevalent in both North and South Dakota<sup>viii</sup>; or that “[t]he FBI has identified the Twin Cities as one of the nation’s 13 largest

centers for child prostitution.”<sup>ix</sup> Journalist Jill Callison observes, “It is all too easy to believe that human trafficking doesn’t happen in South Dakota,” and Junior League of Sioux Falls member Dawn Stenberg notes, “[h]uman trafficking is a topic no one [in the Midwest] wants to talk about [. . .].”<sup>x</sup> And yet, these crimes are connected with those of the past because they represent a continuous violent and brutal Plains identity and reality, even though our popular narratives attempt to obscure this point. We read into the present and past of the Great Plains an intrinsic purity and wholesomeness, an American Eden. Any violence that existed in the past we write off as the growing pains of western settlement, or what criminality exists today as aberrations, rather than as qualities inherent in the Plains region. It is the kindly Paul Bunyan, not the murderous one, who we in the Plains and in the rest of the nation want and need to see as our true selves.

But the more one examines the current climate as well as the history of the Plains, the more prevalent the menacing version of Paul Bunyan becomes. It pervades and pervaded entire communities, and comprises more than simply a few outlaws or killers that, like Dillinger or Starkweather, one might be able to dismiss as anomalies. For example, racial problems are currently rearing their ugly heads in the Plains cities of Omaha and Minneapolis. *The International Business Times* recently declared Omaha and the state of Nebraska to be “the most dangerous place in America to be Black.”<sup>xi</sup> Recent statistics show how rampant drug and gang violence, resulting in multiple violent assaults and murders, are devastating Omaha’s Black community.<sup>xii</sup> As a city, Omaha has not been able or willing to address this violence, and both the city government and police have been accused of ignoring the problem because it is occurring among Omaha’s Black population.<sup>xiii</sup> Further, prejudice in Minneapolis against the

Somali immigrant community is gaining force as many blame them for a rise in the city's violent crime, even though violent crime has actually decreased in Minneapolis in the past several years.<sup>xiv</sup> This bigotry has only been exacerbated by recent arrests of Minneapolis Somalis for their alleged attempts to aid and abet terrorist organizations such as ISIS.<sup>xv</sup> In this narrative, as opposed to the myth of progress, Americans speak of the degeneration of what was once a supposedly peaceful region into crime and chaos; in this narrative, it is the fault of immigrants and non-whites who bring violence into the previously bucolic Plains.

However, the white dominant culture's desire to blame, ignore, or attack immigrant and/or non-white groups has a long history in Plains culture. This violent and criminal identity was particularly on display in Omaha's history when its white citizens twice lynched African American men, Charles Smith in 1898 and William Brown in 1919. Smith was accused of raping a 12 year old white girl and Brown of the rape of a white woman.<sup>xvi</sup> In both cases, mobs of Omahans, consisting of thousands of men, women, and children, gathered to force their way into the Douglas County Courthouse, drag out both men being held there, and hang them from nearby lampposts.<sup>xvii</sup> In Brown's case, the scene was particularly grotesque: "Brown was . . . beaten, shot, hanged, cut down, dragged away and burned in a bonfire at Seventeenth and Dodge."<sup>xviii</sup> Later, "little boys dragged Will Brown's charred remains through Omaha streets until the early hours of the morning."<sup>xix</sup> Only at that point was martial law declared and federal troops sent in to restore order.<sup>xx</sup> Then as now, the police and city officials were slow to react to prevent violence against African Americans. Similarly, in south Minneapolis in June 1931, thousands of angry white homeowners gathered to try to intimidate and oust African Americans Arthur and Edith Lee from their home at 4600 Columbus Avenue, which they

purchased in an all-white neighborhood.<sup>xxi</sup> While individual outlaws or killers in the Plains have either been romanticized or dismissed as anomalies, these instances in which an entire Plains community were guilty of bigotry, atrocities, or tactics of intimidation have largely been erased from our collective memory.

And if these events too often fade in a collective American amnesia of the Great Plains' past, the root of Midwestern criminal identity is even more so in its representations in American cultural narrative. The real "true crime" of the Heartland is that through force and through trails of broken treaties, the US Government obliged Indian nations to sell their lands (for remunerations most often never honored) or brutally removed Native people from their territories altogether without any reason other than that white settlers wanted the land and the resources within. Here, indeed, is the ugly source of Plains criminality: a merciless Paul Bunyan swinging his ax, literally and brutally clearing a continent of its people and animals to make way for white occupation. The final portion of this paper will focus on two of only many such crimes that occurred in the northern Plains, and, more specifically, in South Dakota: the violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty and the Wounded Knee Massacre.

Bruce Springsteen's "Badlands," inspired by Malick's film, avows, "Badlands, you gotta live it every day, / Let the broken hearts stand/ As the price you've gotta pay, / We'll keep pushin' till it's understood, / and these badlands start treating us good."<sup>xxii</sup> These lyrics, if juxtaposed with the crimes committed by the US government against the Lakota, speak of the Plains not as amber waves of grain but as literal "bad lands" in which darkness and violence ferment. Today, the Lakota are trying to reclaim the Black Hills because of the US government's violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, which "clearly prohibited settlement or travel

through portions of the territory that had been granted to the Sioux,<sup>”xxiii</sup> including the sacred Black Hills. However, then-Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano, in writing to General George Armstrong Custer, stated, “I am inclined to think that the occupation of this region of the country is not necessary to the happiness and prosperity of the Indians, and as it is supposed to be rich in minerals and lumber, it is deemed important to have it freed as early as possible from Indian occupancy.”<sup>”xxiv</sup> As a result, in 1874, Custer and an expeditionary force were sent to the Black Hills to determine its resources. When the group discovered gold there, “[in] less than ten days, news [of it] had spread throughout the United States,”<sup>”xxv</sup> and “[i]t took only a few years before a full-on gold rush hit the area.”<sup>”xxvi</sup> In its greed for gold and land resources, the US government stole the territory and broke the treaty that stated the Black Hills would remain Lakota because of its holiness to the Lakota nation. There is perhaps no greater testament to rewriting the past than to carve four presidents’ faces, symbols of the regime that committed the crime, into a mountain taken illegally from a people to whom that land is sacrosanct. In this way, the bad nature of these ill-gotten lands is erased through a new narrative of Great Plains identity, embodied by road signs up and down I-90 in South Dakota celebrating the Midwestern spirit of innovation, hard-work, and patriotism in conceiving and carving Mount Rushmore.

The culmination of these crimes occurred at Wounded Knee in 1890. Following the US government’s arrest and murder of Lakota leader Sitting Bull, Spotted Elk and what remained of his followers who had resisted US occupation left to join others of their nation at Pine Ridge; there, they were confronted with the US 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and ordered to camp along Wounded Knee Creek where “the soldiers had counted the hungry and tired Indians—120 men and 230 women

and children.”<sup>xxvii</sup> The next morning, when the cavalry went to disarm the group of Lakota and Hunkpapa, a gun discharged.<sup>xxviii</sup> In response, “The 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry panicked and opened fire on the hundreds of Lakota . . . the soldiers showed no discretion, shooting young, old, women, and children alike. They [the cavalry] rode miles from camp in order to shoot those who fled the scene. The soldiers ever blasted women and children who were waving white flags.”<sup>xxix</sup> All told, the US army massacred 350 men, women, and children, and left their corpses in the snow to freeze for days before burying all in a mass grave without “any respect paid to ceremony or burial traditions.”<sup>xxx</sup>

If these are not crimes, then what are? Why, given this history, do films or television series like *Fargo* seem to shock and delight audiences with the darkness of the mild-mannered Midwesterner when it is clear that the façade of Midwestern nice is founded on such deeply blood-stained ground? We require new popular narratives that erase our American amnesia and force us to remember the violent and criminal history and identity of the Great Plains. Further, we need historical, critical, and scholarly study of this identity, its source, and its implications. At present, anecdotal, folklore history of Plains criminality predominates, with sensational titles like *Outlaw Tales of Nebraska: True Stories of the Cornhusker State’s Most Infamous Crooks, Culprits, and Cutthroats*<sup>xxxi</sup> or *Minnesota Mayhem: A History of Calamitous Events, Horrific Accidents, Dastardly Crime, and Dreadful Behavior in the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes*.<sup>xxxii</sup> While such folkloric history has value, it is yet necessary to understand more fully how the brutality of the past can enable and engender the violence of the present. This need is especially important when our popular culture insists on retelling the Great Plains myth of regeneration through violence as famously outlined by historian Richard Slotkin.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Disturbingly, in the same *Fargo* television series that presents us with a benign Paul Bunyan, the Midwestern white male characters, whether portrayed by the program as good or bad, rediscover their power and masculinity through violence. As a result, the series endorses and upholds the violent, criminal nature of Plains identity which made possible atrocities such as Wounded Knee. However, by counterpoising this narrative with one of Minnesota nice, *Fargo* and other popular texts of the Great Plains allow us as a nation to forget that crucial connection between the Heartland today and the heartless way in which those states came to be. In Springsteen's famous ballad "Nebraska," based on Charles Starkweather, the lyrics ask, "They wanted to know why I did what I did," and then answer, "Well, sir, I guess there's just a meanness in this world."<sup>xxxiv</sup> However, there is a reason why these things happen in the Plains; we simply allow ourselves to forget.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> William G. Luhr, "*Fargo*: 'Far Removed from the Stereotypes of . . .,'" *The Coen Brothers' Fargo*, ed. William G. Luhr (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2004), Kindle edition, location 193.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 198.

<sup>1</sup> Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder And Its Consequences* (New York: Vintage International, 2012), Kindle edition, 7.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>1</sup> True Crime Collection, *The True Story of Charles Starkweather and Caril Fugate (The Real-Life Mickey and Mallory)* (Wimmelburg, Germany: Hoffman Books, 2013), Kindle edition, location 139-147.

<sup>1</sup> Brady Mallory, "Dillinger Bank Robbery Preserved in SF Law Firm," *KELOLAND.com*, 6 March 2013, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas C. Frohlich, "Cities Where Crime is Soaring," *24/7 Wall Street*, 3 Feb. 2015, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Mark Walker, "N.D. oil boom draws sex trafficking to Sioux Falls," *Argus Leader*, 29 Jan. 2015, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Jill Callison, "Human trafficking: 'It's in our backyard,'" *Argus Leader*, 16 Jan. 2015, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Palash Ghosh, "Omaha, Nebraska: The Most Dangerous Place in America to be Black," *International Business Times*, 27 Jan. 2014, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, and Margery A. Beck, "Omaha looks to combat its homicide problem," *The Lincoln Journal-Star*, 20 Jan. 2013, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Susan Du, "Are Somalis Increasing Crime in Minneapolis?" *City Pages*, 25 Nov. 2014, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Miriam Jordan and Ben Kesling, "Mother of ISIS Recruit Suspect Voices Shock, Disbelief," *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 April 2015, Web, 2 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> David L. Bristow, *A Dirty, Wicked Town: Tales of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Omaha* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 2009), 227-9, 265.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 233-64, 265.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Ben Welter, *Minnesota Mayhem: A History of Calamitous Events, Horrific Accidents, Dastardly Crime, and Dreadful Behavior in the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), Kindle edition, 89.

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Springsteen, *Badlands* (Norwalk, CT: Bruce Springsteen /Jon Landau Management, 1978).

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Straub, *It Happened in South Dakota: Remarkable Events That Shaped History* (Kearney, NE: Morris Book Publishing, 2010), Kindle edition, location 268.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, location 298.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, location 304.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, location 500.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, location 516.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, location 526.

<sup>1</sup> T.D. Griffith, *Outlaw Tales of Nebraska: True Stories of the Cornhusker State's Most Infamous Crooks, Culprits, and Cutthroats* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2010). Kindle edition.

<sup>1</sup> See Welter cited above.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 2000).

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Springsteen, *Nebraska* (Norwalk, CT: Bruce Springsteen /Jon Landau Management, 1982).

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## Topographical Emphases in Hugh Glass Narratives, 1825-2015

Thomas E. Simmons

The saga of Hugh Glass and his crawl across much of South Dakota speaks to both historians and poets. The tellers of tales have found different ways of juxtaposing the western landscape of the early 19th century against the tenacity and strength of one man. One recent example, a short poem, reads:

Travelled Dakota, shelf of earth portrayed,  
Of its expanse and breadth, old hills winding,  
Lost battles, traders, rage-of-Rees fighting.  
Digs of old fur forts into quadrants scraped.  
Mid-life, my sentiment grabs hard of late.  
Oft the tale of the grizzly related:  
How Glass, carved 'way, crawled far, unabated.  
Forgotten by friends who'd first dug his grave.  
Then I heard that tale -- like a trout inside  
When the water itself spills 'ore its banks.  
Stout red-haired Clark with his wondering eyes  
Gasping at the bright Missouri, all ranks;  
Boots pressing grass of darkened soft prairie  
Scratching the scalp of a straw-haired lady.<sup>i</sup>

In 1823 in what is now Perkins County, South Dakota, Hugh Glass was mauled by a grizzly bear and abandoned by his companions. His crawl to Fort Kiowa some 250 miles distant has been examined in verse, prose, film and song beginning in 1825 and continuing through today. The role and character of geography employed by the authors of Hugh Glass' ordeal reveal different aspects of the saga of Hugh Glass while partaking of the authors' own implied geographies. This paper reviews what Hugh Glass endured insofar as the historical record

suggests, then briefly summarizes the major Hugh Glass narratives and teases at the role of topography and environment -- from irrelevant to consuming, from tortuous to bucolic -- that can be found within these tales.

Perhaps the most historically important account of Glass was not the first to see publication. In 1923, Charles Camp edited the memoirs of George Yount (a trapper and the first permanent white settler in the Napa Valley). Yount's reminiscences were not written by Yount; they were told by him to Reverend Orange Clark, an Episcopal priest and Harvard graduate who met Yount in California some thirty years after Hugh Glass' epic crawl. John Myers Myers, the author of *The Saga of Hugh Glass: Pirate, Pawnee, and Mountain Man*, describes Clark's flaws:

[Reverend Orange Clark] was an amateur, who skimmed over matters of intense interest and was fulsome about ones of less concern. ... The examiner of his works learns a great deal about how Orange ticked, and parlous little about the insides of the man whose native woodnotes wild he translated into Ivy League. Nevertheless, American literature owes the parson a vote of thanks for preserving information, not elsewhere pickled in print, about one of the nation's great legendary figures. ii

From Charles Camp's editing and rewriting of Rev. Orange Clark's account of George Yount's recollections of what Hugh Glass once related to Yount<sup>iii</sup>, the following sketch is largely drawn (along with conclusions drawn by Meyers' searching analysis):

Hugh Glass was probably born between 1780 and 1790 in Pennsylvania. His first occupation was that of a sailor. After several years on the seas, he was captured by pirates, pirates, in fact, under the command of Jean Lafitte, famed as a lynchpin in Andrew Jackson's success at the Battle of New Orleans. At the time of Glass' capture, Lafitte headquartered some 800 buccaneers on the eastern edge of the island of Galveston where the city of the same name is located today. With his statute, strength, and fortitude, Glass must have been selected by

the pirates who overtook his ship as meriting diversion from the plank and conversion to their ranks and Glass must have agreed.

How long Glass was pirate Glass is unknown. His biographers paint him as a reluctant pirate, avoiding the most dastardly deeds, the slaughter of sailors; the execution of any passengers. Perhaps. Then again Glass may have had few scruples about piracy. But Glass' fierce independence and stubborn design proved mismatched to the task. Some chore or order made him bristle and his refusal – along with that of a co-freebooter – netted him and his friend the charge of mutiny. Given the value of hands on any ship, a kind of due process was in place. The captain lacked the authority to carry out the standard capital sentence for the offense absent approval from Lafitte. So the pair's doom was suspended until this could occur. Knowing their days were limited and their options few, Glass and his partner in noncompliance decided to quietly jump overboard and swim for shore two miles distant, carrying some lightweight possible, perhaps a pair of knives, flint and steel, a bit of food and trade items. Their odds were not good. The littoral currents were strong, the geography of Texas was unmapped and road less and Karankawa Indians populated Galveston Bay, famed for their extensive tattoos and hearty cannibalistic appetites. Myers pegs the time of Glass' escape from his life of piracy as late 1818 or early 1819.<sup>iv</sup> Glass and his friend reached the shores of the then Spanish Empire and waded into cane jungles and bayous stocked with alligators and snakes.

Side-stepping the various hazards, Glass and his unnamed companion trekked north. Though they would have known that they could have reached Louisiana by heading east, Myers speculates that the pair chose to make for the prairies to avoid the Karankawas.<sup>v</sup> Eventually

they passed over the Santa Fe Trail, but they may not have noticed it, scratched out and dusted over by migrating buffalo. Unarmed and horseless, they must have made do by scavenging for rodents and snakes or fashioning primitive spears or projectiles for larger game. Somehow, they managed to pass through the lands held by the Karankawas, the Osages, the Comanches, and the Kiowas. But a thousand miles from the Texas coast, they met with the Loup Pawnees in present day western Kansas.

Glass and his friend were captured and readied for ritual sacrifice. Glass watched as resin-rich slivers of pine were thrust into various parts of his friend's naked body and kindling was readied at his feet. Lighting the combustibles, the man became a crackling flame. Hugh Glass was next.

In his hand Glass held a packet of cinnabar, red mercury sulfide, a red war paint also known as vermilion. Desperate or inspired (or both), just as Glass was about to be readied for immolation, he bowed and generously extended the cinnabar to the chief. Somehow, the chief was so caught off guard that he interpreted the gesture as a signal to pardon Glass. The chief announced that he was adopting the man as his son. For years after, Glass lived life as a Pawnee, learning the language, the ways of hunting and the ways of war against neighboring tribes. Importantly, he would have absorbed botanical knowledge as well, what plants heal, which plants are edible, and which to avoid. He would have learned that insects or grubs can supply calories in a fix.

Gradually, Americans were filtering into the Pawnees' territory. As contact increased, the desire to secure safe transit suggested to the government the merits of diplomacy. William Clark, the U.S. Superintendent of Indian Affairs headquartered in Saint Louis, invited the

Pawnee chief to a meeting. Glass accompanied him as an interpreter and guide. The chief could not have been overly surprised when Glass took the opportunity to part ways. When the chief returned to his settlements, Glass stayed behind. The year was 1822.

Although most comfortable on the deck of an ocean-going vessel, Glass likely participated in pirate-esque atrocities and some witnesses may have survived. This would have given him pause if he had wanted to return to a life of sailing and perhaps explains why he decided instead to turn to the deck of a keelboat for his livelihood. Though he lacked experience in trapping or fur trading, the skills of a hunter were essential in the fur trade as expeditions relied on harvesting meat on the go as a means of sustaining their members. In January of 1823, a Saint Louis newspaper ran an ad which caught Glass's literate<sup>vii</sup> eye:

#### For the Rocky Mountains

The subscribers wish to engage One Hundred MEN, to ascend the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains, There to be employed as Hunters. As a compensation to each man fit for such business, \$200 Per Annum, will be given for his services, as aforesaid. For particulars, apply to J.V. GARMIER, or W. ASHLEY, at St. Louis. The expedition will set out for this place on or before the first of March next.

ASHLEY AND HENRY. (Missouri Republican, 1/16/1823)

Glass joined as a hunter for the expedition with a hundred other men led by Ashley on two keel boats, the *Yellowstone Packet* and the *Rocky Mountains*, early in March. Before even the first day's journey was complete, one man fell overboard and was drowned. A week later, upriver at Saint Charles, three men were conveying a barrel of gunpowder while one of them smoked a pipe; a spark fell and the men were blown, according to a newspaper story, "several hundred feet" into the air. All three died.

By late May, the expedition was nearing the Grand River and encountered more trouble. General William Ashley received a message from Major Andrew Henry (encamped in Montana) that Henry needed horses to replace mounts stolen by the Blackfeet (and men to replace those killed). Ashley put ashore to trade with two walled villages of Arikara on the west bank near Cottonwood Creek, each with about seventy lodges. There, he exchanged goods (perhaps guns and ammunition) for some forty or fifty horses. A beach provided a spot for Glass and the other the hunters to camp overnight. The trappers remained on board the keelboats. Some of the hunters, including one Aaron Stephens, left the beach to spend the night with Arikara women.

At about 3:00 a.m. on June 2, Ed Rose informed General Ashley that Stephens had been killed by the Indians. Rose also relayed his suspicions that the Arikara were readying for a surprise attack. Ashley wasn't concerned about the first bit of news and discounted the second.

A heavy downpour was falling as dawn broke and the Arikara opened fire on the tents on the beach. The keelboats immediately thrashed away from the firefight while the hunters dug in and returned fire until it was clear that they were caught in an untenable position. They jumped into the river and swam after the boats. Eleven men died by drowning or gunshots; four more would die of their wounds. Hugh Glass took a ball in the leg. Others were wounded as well, some badly. Ashley retreated downstream to where the Cheyenne River joins the Missouri near present day Eagle Butte.

Ashley wrote the military garrison at present day Council Bluffs, Iowa about the attack and asked for help. Ashley's letter, and a condolences letter from Hugh Glass to the father of

John Gardner who had been killed in the firefight, were relayed on the *Yellowstone Packet* along with the more badly wounded and shaken of the surviving expedition members. Only thirty men remained behind. All of the just-purchased horses had been either captured or killed.

Ashley's letter describing the Arikara attack was received by Colonel Henry Leavenworth at Fort Atkinson. Guidance from his superior in Louisville, Kentucky could not be obtained without several weeks wait. So Leavenworth led six companies upriver. They arrived at the Arikara village on August 9, but not before one of Leavenworth's boats caught a tree snag and sank with the loss of seven men and fifty guns (the whisky was rescued) and the *Yellowstone Packet* was caught by the wind and tipped; a cannon, guns and powder sunk (but again, the men managed to save the whisky). When Leavenworth disembarked at the mouth of the Grand, he was outnumbered, despite having arrived with a number of Sioux allies. He faced defensive works of dry moats and cottonwood palisades surrounding the villages, and he was lighter on ammunition and guns than he had planned. This might explain his caution.

The first cannon shot Leavenworth fired decapitated the Arikara Chief Grey Eyes, whom Hugh Glass had known while living with the Pawnees. <sup>ix</sup> Leavenworth deployed artillery but held his infantry and cavalry back. When the smoke cleared, two of his men were slightly wounded; two Sioux had been killed; perhaps thirty Arikara. Leavenworth entered into peace talks on August 11. The Sioux were disgusted, as were the Ashley men. The Sioux decamped (taking with them some of Ashley's horses and Leavenworth's mules). The Arikara quietly abandoned the battlefield, the empty villages were burned, and the army sailed back to Fort Atkinson. The news of Leavenworth's ineffectual show of force spread quickly across the

plains. It served to encourage greater Indian hostilities against the invading settlers and fur trappers.

Henry now led thirteen men on a shortcut heading straight west, following the Grand River towards their destination of Ashley's fort on the Yellowstone River. The rest continued upstream on the more circuitous route of the Missouri River in the *Rocky Mountains* keelboat. Hugh Glass was among the thirteen taking the overland route. They left the Missouri River on August 16.

Four days later, the small group was attacked by the typically peaceful Mandans during the night. Two men were killed, two wounded, two horses were taken. Henry tried to keep the survivors close, but Hugh "Glass, as usual, could not be kept, in obedience to orders, with the band, but persevered to thread his way alone through the bushes & chapparel"<sup>x</sup> as they approached the forks of the Grand.

Here, Glass came between a grizzly and her two cubs in a thicket of plums. He got off one shot before the bear was on him, standing on her hind legs. The bear raked his back with her claws as Glass stabbed away with his knife. She ripped open his throat, bit down on his head, held him aloft, and threw him to the ground. She tore a chunk of his buttocks and chewed into his leg and his shoulder before collapsing on top of him, dead. The date of Hugh Glass' maiming is best estimated as August 23, 1823. He was "tore nearly all to pieces." When the other men came upon him, they were astounded that he was alive. They assumed he would be dead within a few hours.

The next morning, Hugh Glass was unconscious but still breathing, a red bubble rising and then shrinking from a puncture wound in his trachea. His wounds were crudely stitched

and the men attempted to give him water and food. Fearful of another Indian attack, Henry ordered a litter to be constructed and the group trudged on, still expecting that Glass would expire within a day's journey. But three (or perhaps as many as six) days later (accounts vary), Glass was still breathing, and the group's progress was being hampered by carrying him along.

Major Henry determined that Glass would have to be left behind but proposed that two men stay and tend him until he died. Extra pay was offered. John Fitzgerald and Jim Bridger (*that* Jim Bridger,<sup>xii</sup> age nineteen, the youngest in the group) agreed, dug a grave for Glass, set up camp next to a spring near the headwaters of the Grand, and waited. They held out for four days (or perhaps five or perhaps even six) before the fear of Indian attacks overcame them. Then they abandoned him, taking his rifle and possible bag with his flint and steel (for how else to claim to Henry that Glass had died since it would be unthinkable to bury such valuable items along with their owner).

Hugh Glass later claimed that he had been conscious enough to hear Bridger and Fitzgerald reaching their decision to abandon him. Days passed before Glass escaped his delirium sufficiently to begin to feed himself on berries within his reach. He lay there, drinking from the spring and chewing berries, with fall in the air.

After smashing a torpor-infused rattlesnake with a rock and gobbling up its flesh, Glass finally had enough nourishment to begin his crawl back towards present day Chamberlain. His only implement for survival was a razor that Bridger and Fitzgerald had accidentally left behind and Glass had found in the dirt. What he missed most was his rifle. As Myers puts it: "[I]n wreaking the ewe-lamb injury of stealing the gun of Hugh's bosom, his wrongers had put passion back in a broken man who had a moment since been without any driving gears."<sup>xiii</sup>

\* \* \*

The earliest historical record of Hugh Glass is also arguably the first fictionalized—or at least creatively narrated—account. Judge James Hall’s 1825 short narrative presented the “peculiar characteristics” of “American woodsmen” in the “trackless deserts” of the plains.<sup>xv</sup> He claimed that the narrative was relayed to him by Glass himself. In it, Hall pragmatically portrays the landscape of Hugh Glass’ story with scientific detachment as “prairie country, occasionally interspersed with thickets of brush-wood, dwarf-plumb trees, and other shrubs indigenous to a sandy, sterile soil.”<sup>xvi</sup>

John Neihardt’s verse version of Hugh Glass’ story was first published in 1915 as *The Song of Hugh Glass*.<sup>xvii</sup> Neihardt is best known today for transcribing the words of Oglala medicine man Black Elk in *Black Elk Speaks*.<sup>xviii</sup> *The Song of Hugh Glass* relies in some measure on Neihardt’s collection of the oral histories of Glass retold and retained by Native Americans. Neihardt introduces the dreamscape of Glass’ narrative which is repeated in every fictionalized account which follows.<sup>xix</sup>

Neihardt’s topography is a living thing, almost a character itself, where a butte can “soar” and the dawn can “creep.”<sup>xx</sup>

A burning twist of valley grasses threw  
Blair light about the region of the spring.  
Then Jamie, torch aloft and shuddering,  
Knelt there beside his friend, and moaned: “O Hugh”<sup>xxi</sup>

And later:

Now kindled by the yet unrisen moon,  
The East went pale; and like a naked thing  
A little wind ran vexed and shivering  
Along the dusk, till Jamie shivered too<sup>xxii</sup>

The late great Frederick Manfred's *Lord Grizzly*<sup>xxiii</sup> is, alongside *The Golden Bowl*, Manfred's most enduring work. In *Lord Grizzly*, Glass invokes the bear as he crawls and finally stands as his injuries heal. The reader looks out at the South Dakota landscape through Glass' eyes:

He watched the sun hit the horizon in a vast explosion of clear yellow light. He watched the shadows race in from the bluffs across the South Fork."<sup>xxvi</sup>

With Manfred, who drove and walked the route over which Hugh crawled to prepare himself for the writing of it,<sup>xxvii</sup> the landscape is poetic and again anthropomorphic, but unsentimental:

Cottonwood leaves as yellow as buttercups fluttered high overhead. The morning sky was a deep gentian blue, was clean and serene. The stony bluffs to either side bulked up sharply. Here and there the bluff cheeks were bearded out with spine cactus. Far down the slowly twisting river valley perspective faded off into a hazy aven-blue.<sup>xxviii</sup>

The first film to be made out of the legend of Hugh Glass was Director Richard Sarafian's *Man in the Wilderness*.<sup>xxix</sup> In it, John Huston plays the role of Major Henry, bizarrely leading an expedition across the plains as they tow an enormous wooden boat on wheels. Huston portrays Henry as a kind of fur trading Captain Ahab. Richard Harris, in the role of Glass (renamed "Bass"), is believable right up to the point where he befriends a baby rabbit.

In 1994, science fiction writer<sup>xxx</sup> Robert Zelanzky along with coauthor Gerald Hausman published *The Wilderness*.<sup>xxxi</sup> Zelanzky's work merges the landscape with Glass himself:

The butte was gone, though his body seemed to know its direction, hidden behind a wavering wall of white. Steam rose from the wet plain, clinging and swaying. He crawled amid its veils, keeping the growing light to his left.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Then:

Crawling onward, he saw the sky clear above him. The mist slowly subsided. No clouds marred the blue. The ground still oozed as he moved. The butte came into view once

more, just where he'd felt it to be, and he held his soggy course toward its now gleaming brilliance.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The most recent fictionalized account of Hugh Glass is Michael Punke's *The Revenant*.<sup>xxxiv</sup> A film based on the same and starring Leonardo DiCaprio is rumored to have completed filming (in British Columbia) this month; it is scheduled for release in January, 2016. In the book, Punke's topography is a dark stage and the characters only occasionally interface with an aspect of the plains as a necessary component to the narrative; landscape elements only merit description when they advance the actors' movements, like props upon the stage:

Twin buttes framed the valley in front of Glass, forcing the Grand River through a narrow channel between. Glass remembered the buttes from the trip upriver with Captain [sic] Henry. As he crawled further east along the Grand, distinctive features became increasingly rare. Even the cottonwoods seem to have been swallowed by the sea of prairie grass.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Finally, Hugh Glass appears in song. Of Monsters and Men is a five-member "indie" folk band from Iceland. Track six on Of Monsters and Men's album "My Head is an Animal" is titled *Six Weeks*, referring to the temporal length of Hugh Glass' crawl to Fort Kiowa:

Get up. Shake the rust.  
We crawl. We crawl. We crawl.  
We crawl on the ground.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The landscapes from these various authors over the last 190 years portray evolving (or at least changing) artistic perspectives of the land over which Glass crawled. If any trend can be discerned it is that the profile of the landscape seems to recede further and further from the narrative over the decades. Neihardt certainly took a more spiritual view of Hugh Glass' path than Manfred.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Professor Coleman's 2012 nonfiction account of Glass, despite its

environmental themes, ignores topography and elevates the physical shell; the body of Glass and that of the bear. “The West tore some bodies up,” Coleman asserts.<sup>xxxviii</sup> The landscape’s remaining function is as a challenge presented; an obstacle.

Thoreau walked into the freedom of the West; Glass crawled there. He achieved personal independence on all fours, which hinted at the drag his environment placed on his liberation.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The wilderness scoured humans of nonessentials, freed them from the junk of everyday life. ... But not Hugh Glass... He crawled out of the void, undaunted and undented. He entered the bushes annoyed; he emerged fuming.<sup>xl</sup>

As Hugh Glass recedes further and further into history, the pathless wilderness fades and blurs around him, losing its former place in the narrative or becoming indivisible from Glass, collapsing into only “a void.” Glass meanwhile becomes more tangible to us; he is now framed in greater detail; first crawling—and then, finally, striding—in sharper relief—across the prairie, “annoyed” and “fuming” as he pursues the men who left him to die and snatched his rifle.

## References

<sup>i</sup> Thomas E. Simmons, "On First Looking Into Neihardt's Hugh Glass," *Pasque Petals* (Fall 2014), 14.

<sup>ii</sup> John Myers Myers, *Saga of Hugh Glass: Pirate, Pawnee and Mountain Man* (1963; repr., Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 17.

<sup>iii</sup> Charles L. Camp, ed. *George C. Yount and his Chronicles of the West* (1923; repr., Denver, Colo.: Old West Publishing Co. 1954).

<sup>iv</sup> Myers, *Saga*, 47.

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>vi</sup> Of all the elements in the long violent and improbable life of Hugh Glass, this scene seems the least probable. Bruce Bradley's fictional account, in patching up the slim and unconvincing account from Yount, introduces the character of Little Feather, a Sioux woman who had been married to a white man and captured by the Pawnees. Little Feather coaches Glass on how to carry out a carefully orchestrated and symbolically significant demonstration that so surprises and impresses the Pawnee that Glass is released as a sacrifice and welcomed into the tribe. Bradley's account finds no support in the historical record, but succeeds in suggesting an actor in the form of Little Feather who lends believability to the otherwise baffling episode. Bruce Bradley, *Hugh Glass* (Coral Springs, Fla.: Llumina Press 1999), 70-90.

<sup>vii</sup> Hugh Glass is typically portrayed as literate on account of a surviving letter to the father of John S. Gardner from Glass following John's death in the May 1823 Arikara attack. The letter was turned over to the South Dakota Historical Society by a descendant of the addressee but later stolen; it is now lost but reprinted in John G. Neihardt's *The Splendid Wayfaring* (1920). It could very well be, however, that a clerk transcribed the letter for Glass.

<sup>viii</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>ix</sup> Although separated geographically the Arikara and Pawnee speak different dialects of the same language.

<sup>x</sup> Camp, Yount, 198.

<sup>xi</sup> Daniel T. Potts, *Early Yellowstone and Western Experiences: Yellowstone Nature Notes*, Vol. XXI (September-October, 1947), 6.

<sup>xii</sup> James Felix Bridger, celebrated mountain man, was the first European-American to see Great Salt Lake, constructed Fort Bridger on the Green River, and lends his name to Bridger Pass in Wyoming.

<sup>xiii</sup> Myers, *Saga*, 133.

<sup>xiv</sup> The only full length nonfiction accounts of Hugh Glass are Jon T. Coleman, *Here Lies Hugh Glass: A Mountain Man, a Bear, and the Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); and Meyers, *Saga*, *supra* note ii.

<sup>xv</sup> Hon. Judge Hall, *Letters from the West* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828) (originally published in the *Saint Louis Intelligencer* in June of 1825), 293.

<sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>xvii</sup> John G. Neihardt, *The Song of Hugh Glass* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1915). *The Song of Hugh Glass* was the first third of Neihardt's trilogy titled *A Cycle of the West* (1949).

<sup>xviii</sup> John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: The Complete Edition* (1932; rpt.; Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, 2014).

<sup>xix</sup> See Neihardt, *Song*, 46 (“Snatchy dreams of sick pools”); Manfred, *Lord Grizzly* (1954; repr., New York: Signet, 1964), 172 (“He dipped into sleep and dreamt again.”); Robert M. McClung, *Hugh Glass, Mountain Man* (New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1990), 147 (“[T]he images kept coming, this time in the form of dreams.”); Robert Zelanzy and Gerald Hausman, *Wilderness* (New York: Forge, 1994), 90 (“Dreaming, he lay in that hole”); Bradley, *Hugh Glass*, 179 (“Hugh lay in a sort of dream-paralysis”); Michael Punke, *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2002), 64 (“[H]e realized the snake—or at least the snake bites—were the imagined horror of a nightmare.”).

<sup>xx</sup> Neihardt, *Song*, 52-53.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>xxii</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Manfred, *Lord Grizzly*.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Frederick Manfred, *The Golden Bowl* (1944; rpt.; Pierre, S.D.: South Dakota Humanities, 1992).

<sup>xxv</sup> “The grizzly is the lord of the animal world” wrote Manfred while “Hugh Glass, after his heroic crawl, was the lord of all mountain men. Using that title as a bull’s-eye helped me keep my eye on the main thrust of the story.” Frederick Feikema Manfred, “The Making of Lord Grizzly,” *15 South Dakota History* 200, 211 (1986).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Manfred, *Lord Grizzly*, 167.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Manfred explained that he hiked the route of Glass past Thunder Butte and Rattlesnake Butte:

All the way over those two heights of land I took notes. I also had with me a gunnysack and some one hundred small wax-paper bags. Every time I saw something interesting—a flower, some grass, what a farmer would call a weed—I would clip it, mark it on the map, and put it in the wax bag and then into the gunnysack. ... I thought, too, I should taste some of the things. So, when I came upon an ant or grasshopper, I pinched them in my fingers and tasted. I also spotted mice, but them I didn’t taste.

Manfred, *The Making*, 204.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Manfred, *Lord Grizzly*, 217.

<sup>xxix</sup> *Man in the Wilderness*, directed by Richard Sarafian (1971; Warner Home Video 2008), DVD.

<sup>xxx</sup> Coincidentally, John Myers Myers, the author of the single best study of Hugh Glass, was himself best known for authoring a science fiction/fantasy novel, *Silverlock* (1949).

<sup>xxxi</sup> Zelanzy and Hausman, *Wilderness*.

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-31.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Punke, *Revenant*.

<sup>xxxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 98. Andrew Henry held the rank of major, not captain.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Of *Monsters and Men*, “Six Weeks,” by Ragnar Þórhallsson and Arnar Rósenkranz Hilmarsson, on *My Head is an Animal*, United Republic, compact disc. Originally released in 2012.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Manfred wrote that after days of walking Glass’s path:

I next visited Will Robinson, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. Robinson became intrigued with my project. He hoped that I wouldn’t go about it the way Neihardt did. He said he had gone along with Neihardt to work out Hugh’s

trail, and once, as they were driving along, Neihardt suddenly asked him to stop driving. Robinson did. "Ah," Neihardt had whispered, "Hugh went along here. On his hands and knees." Robinson asked, "How do you know?" "I can feel him having been here," Neihardt answered. Robinson shook his head depreciatingly. Robinson was a former army officer and an amateur historian, and to him that was a ridiculous way of doing research.

Manfred, *The Making*, 206.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Coleman, *Here Lies*, 5.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>xl</sup> *Ibid.* 144.

## **Beginning and Endings of the West in South Dakota:**

### **Hiawatha Asylum**

Jennifer Soule, Ph.D.

I view life as a continuum of connections—beginnings and endings that constantly circle wide and recycle. As a South Dakota native, I believe it's possible to see this more clearly here, where plants, people, cultures which meet and interact daily. I thoroughly enjoy this place, my home, and want to share some reflections with you.

My MFA in creative writing from the University of Nebraska was a period of transition from a career in social work to the world of writing. The poems written and honed during this time represent a second life that seeks to integrate what came before and move in a new direction. David Pichaske begins *Rooted: Seven Midwest Writers of Place* by saying: "Literature boils down, mostly to three basic questions: Who am I? What made me what I am? What might I become? It is the answer to those questions that make poetry, stories, novels and history worth reading—and writing" (2). Long ago and far away in the 1960s, I pursued in the village of Vermillion a double major in English and sociology because I would not forsake one love for the other. Language was a first love, and I wanted to stay with it, but change was in the wind those days, specifically, an urgency to change the world. So I lit out for the territory of social change and social work. However, as is reflected in my poems, I have remained a border dweller between the world of words and the world of activism. There is also a back-and-forth movement in my life and work between home(s) and loss of home(s) and between the personal and the larger world. Briefly the thematic and aesthetic influences on my poetry fall roughly into four major areas: place/regional poetry/South Dakota; poetry of witness, especially

surrounding social issues; feminism; and the Japanese aesthetic. I realize that this is a bit of a hodgepodge, as I'm a poet mutt rather than a purebred poet. Nonetheless, I'm a language mutt who likes to roll around in word grasses and mud or just get into everything, even if it's messy. I focus on place and witness in this paper.

The title of my MFA creative thesis, *Following the Hawk Home*, arrived with the last line of a first poem and designs to invite the reader into the collection. The overall architecture of the thesis is a creative structure built on a foundation of the four thematic cornerstones mentioned earlier but also including a center pole or nexus, the middle section: The Hiawatha Asylum for Insane Indians. Other sections support the center. One overarching theme is a questing toward home, both physical and psychological, which includes, of course, many beginnings and endings. There is a sense of leaving and returning like the migrating snow geese, favorites of mine, who fly into my poems along with other birds.

### **Regional/ Poetry and Place**

I clearly have a passion for place, and the regional poetry of South Dakota is a major theme in my work. I believe the basic questions Pichaske mentions begin in one place and follow us wherever we go as we continue to answer them throughout our lives. There are times, such as during a concentrated course of study like an MFA, when they may come into sharper focus.

Pichaske quotes Patricia Hampl, a favorite writer of mine, who suggests that "landscape plays a key role in the formation of the imagination. . . . [I]t is the primer coat under all we can paint for ourselves and others" (12). South Dakota was my primer coat, both physically and artistically

Language dominates the culture of a place. Referencing Lisel Mueller, another writer whom I admire, Pichaske describes a tradition of writing from this place which “draws content from ‘the heart of the heartland’ and owes to geography its peculiar style—directness, practicality, close observation, experiences as a touchstone of knowledge, and astuteness about people and the impact of social and economic conditions on their relationships and attitudes” (151). I sense many of these word qualities are in the milk we drink as children and that they become part of our bones as a writing foundation. I use plain, concrete language in writing about my home state.

My passion for place has everything to do with growing up in South Dakota, where place is writ large on the psyche. I always felt that I had all the space in the world for my imagination to roam. For many of us who grew up in the land between the Mississippi and the Rockies—including the upper Midwest, where the prairie and the Great Plains meet—a starting point is often the landscape and all that it entails. Vastness of space, the bright big blue sky, wind, and seasonal weather drama all anchored my early years in South Dakota. So, too, did the direct, plain language that is the plainsong. Even while I knew I would eventually leave to experience adventures elsewhere, the place was writing itself into my heart and bones. When I returned as an adult woman, I felt somewhat as if I had come home to an abandoned lover but who was patient enough to know that I would return and love what I did not see before. And I did. Of course, wherever I was, I always said I was from South Dakota.

Two South Dakota poets who were early influences on me as a writer are Kathleen Norris and Linda Hasselstrom. Both have book covers with those wide images of land and sky that, when I first saw them, triggered “home” for me. In *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, Norris

notes in the first chapter that: “The so-called emptiness of the Plains is full of such miraculous ‘little things.’” Her poetry is deeply rooted in this place, with lines like the following from the poem “Harvest” in *Journey: New and Selected Poems 1960-1999*: “the pheasant steps out of a medieval tapestry / into South Dakota,” (2-3).

Linda Hasselstrom, a South Dakota poet, whom I know and respect as a friend, is a woman of the land. By land, she means, as Pichaske quotes: “not only the actual earth, water, and air, but the attitudes that have come to characterize residents: a certain independence from herd thinking; a willingness—even eagerness—to face hardships that include isolation and physical labor; and pride in our differences from metropolitan sophisticates” (151). It’s a demanding land of challenges and tensions. This is also good training ground for a poet in learning how tensions abound. Certainly, my Hiawatha poems address tensions, and they abound in the daily struggle for survival that requires a willingness to persevere in the face of hardship.

Like Hasselstrom and others from the region, I know that even though there is enormous beauty, South Dakota is not a romantic place, but rather one that is often demanding and harsh. The harshness includes not only extremes of weather but also extremes of race relations. It is a bi-cultural state of Indian and pioneer sensibilities, and the two groups still struggle to find a way to live together. While I was growing up, the divide seemed even larger because I lived “East River,” where the Native American population was much smaller. This topic was rarely addressed in the 1950s and 1960s in the school systems or anywhere else.

## Poetry of Witness

As the centerpiece, Hiawatha Asylum brings together the influences of both regional poetry and the poetry of witness, another major cornerstone. While some would define “poetry of witness” as anti-war poetry or political poetry or social poetry, I choose to work with a broader definition of political or witness poetry that is more focused on other areas of social justice, ranging from racism and sexism to social class and disposition. I see witness poetry as a large space where the poet/writer and life intersect and in which the poet tries to understand the complexity of the human condition. The “forgotten” and often ignored South Dakota history of the Hiawatha Asylum is a subject to which I witness.

I struggled with how to approach this topic as poet when it is not my ethnic heritage, but I wanted to find a way because Native American culture and history are very integral to the place I come from and know as home. I decided to use Dr. Silk, an investigating psychiatrist, as a primary persona presenting some of the information that can be found in his final report.

I also wanted a sense of the other characters in the asylum and the Canton community, so I used dramatic monologues of community members: the letters from the Augustana Academy Student,” “Night Train,” “Yells at Night,” and “Canton Farmer.” To include a Native American perspective, I created a persona of a ghost Native American woman whose name, Long Time Owl Woman, captures the imagination of the time and place.

All poems in the Hiawatha sequences are grounded in facts. The third-person-poet-observer approach is evident in “SD Senator Richard Pettigrew’s Plea,” “How to Get Committed to Hiawatha,” and “Death at Hiawatha.” Essentially, the poems in Hiawatha Asylum work together as one long poem with a single narrative thread connecting lyrical and found poems.

The work is a collage of history, a place, and a political atrocity. Poetry of witness lends itself well to the longer, narrative form. While it certainly occurs in powerful individual poems by many poets, I sense poetry of witness likes more room to spill out over a larger territory, and this appeals to my sensibilities for a larger picture, which very likely stems from both my South Dakota roots and my social work background. It also appeals to an interest in juxtaposition and the combining of disparate fragments to create a whole with a different texture.

In combining fragments and textures and poets of witness, Muriel Rukeyser stands tall as a woman not afraid to write poetry about tough issues. She worked in some rough poetry neighborhoods. A major poet of influence for me, her poetry of a little-known event in West Virginia's mining history inspired me.

"The Book of the Dead" is an emotionally honest work about the disaster of the men who drilled the Gauley Bridge tunnel and died from silicosis, a lung disease from silicate dust. "The Book of the Dead" is a seminal sequence of poems in the book, *U.S. 1*, which uses *Congressional Record* documents to narrate an injustice. Rukeyser's use of documents was an impetus for me to consider using such in the Hiawatha sequence, in the found poems of Senator Pettigrew and the written report of Dr. Silk. I am also particularly interested with the 1930s of the New Deal and the documentary work of writers and photographers such as James Agee, Walker Evans, and Dorothea Lange feed into the world of Rukeyser who traveled the U.S. and the world as a witness, recording and turning into poetry major events of the twentieth century, including not only Scottsboro and Gauley Bridge but also the Spanish Civil War, the 1936 anti-fascist Olympics, Vietnam, and a Korean poet's imprisonment. I admire such attempts

to treat huge issues in poetry. In this collection, I address two big issues, racism and homelessness, and appreciate the work of Rukeyser and other witness poets.

Muriel Rukeyser and Denise Levertov were good friends. Levertov was also influential in my quest for what she called a poetry of engagement as explored in her essays, *The Poet in the World*. The core of her essay is a “Reverence for Life” (she always capitalizes these words), which emerges strongly in all of Levertov’s poetry: “All the thinking I do about poetry leads me back, always, to Reverence for Life as the ground for poetic activity; because it seems the ground for Attention” (54). Such reverence is a core quality in witness poetry and a phrase that has resonated for me since I first heard it as a young woman. She believed that poetry came from experience and perceptions so intensely felt that they demanded words. Certainly, this is what prompted my poems on the Hiawatha Asylum.

Natasha Tretheway and Lee Ann Roripaugh are contemporary poets of witness. In *Native Guard*, Tretheway skillfully weaves together her moving autobiography with history to create a personal and universal narrative much larger than her own life addressing racism in the deep south.

In *Beyond Heart Mountain*, Lee Ann Roripaugh weaves the experience of Japanese Americans in internment camps. Both Tretheway and Roripaugh combine close attention to craft with issues of historical and political significance. Tretheway uses more traditional forms as containers for powerful emotions and events, while Roripaugh uses a free verse dramatic monologue to achieve this. Both are extremely effective. In the Hiawatha poems, I want to show the history of a place and events through an imagining of the lives of the characters speaking, like the young Augustana Academy student and the nurse who tends Yells at Night.

Feminist poet Alicia Ostriker is a good bridge between the poetry of historical witness and feminism. In her essay, "Beyond Confession: The Poetics of Postmodern Witness," Ostriker asks in the need to speak against atrocities, "But how is resistance to be poetically organized? Obviously, not by a poetics *purely* of the self. The poem must include history. It must contain the news. But a poetics that *denies* self is also useless: for without a consciousness that desires, suffers, and chooses, there is no ethical or political model for the reader" (319). She states that for her "postmodern witness is a marriage of opposites. It employs the fragmented structures and polyglot associations originating in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, and William Carlos Williams' *Paterson*" (320). She continues: "like these modernist works, poems of postmodern witness reach toward the objectively encyclopedic; reject master narrative; and refuse to pretend to coherence" (320). This poet is not simply a phantom manipulator of words, but a confused actual person, caught in a world of catastrophe that the poem must somehow both mirror and transcend" (320). I like the marriage of opposites and also going beyond it. I work with this concern in my poems, such as "Seeing Myself" in homeless women and as a young volunteer in "Smoking Mr. V."

Some poems address other issues. "Hotel Hot Springs" is an observation of a place that welcomes homeless vets. Other poems, like "Goodwill," "Surplus Beans," and "Homeless at McDonald's," focus on larger social problems by using small, concrete details of poverty and hunger. I believe the poetry of witness needs the concrete details—what Maxine Kumin refers to as furniture and geography—to prevent falling into the trap of preaching or haranguing. The aim is to use language very carefully to make hard facts and issues compassionately compelling in a new way.

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## The Friendship that Brought Statehood to the Dakotas

John Timm

Arthur Mellette and Benjamin Harrison first became friends at the Indiana State Republican Convention in 1866. They were both young men, Arthur was twenty-four years old and Benjamin was thirty-three. Benjamin had been a member in the Republican Party for thirteen years. Arthur on the other hand was just joining. They both were politically motivated Republicans with likeminded opinions and attitudes, so having plenty of common ground it was not too surprising that their careers might become intertwined.

But what made a close friendship between them seem so unlikely, was their nearly polar opposite personalities. And yet their friendship lasted for thirty years, until Mellette's death on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1896. Through those many years they shared memories good and bad, traded favors, faced problems and worked through hardships. But even when they had differences and there were some, it never detracted from their friendship.

Certainly a staple in the relationship's longevity was their brotherhood in the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity.(1) Harrison had joined the fraternity in 1850 at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Mellette joined the fraternity at Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana, in 1860, ten years later. Funny how small coincidences can sometimes have such great effects on people's relationships.

The fraternity was founded right there on the University of Miami campus. Its founders were six undergraduate students who authored a document called "*The Bond*". It centered around three principal objectives: "the cultivation of friendship among its members;

maintaining a high degree of individual mental discipline; and living a life at a high standard of individual morality. Each member had to pledge to these cardinal principles upon their initiation into the fraternity. So when Harrison and Mellette discovered they were fraternity brothers, well, they spent their lives always helping and holding each other to "*The Bond*".

Mellette was smart, well educated, out-going, liked to meet people and usually made a favorable impression on others. He was particularly affective in networking with individuals or in groups. He paid close attention to written correspondence with others, believing it was imperative to keep in touch with acquaintances and cultivating relationships.

Harrison was extremely intelligent, analytical and always self-assured. But unlike Mellette, Harrison was a bit eccentric and had some introverted tendencies. He was somewhat of a loner. Although he was a very gifted and persuasive public speaker, in private many people found to be cold and impersonal. That characteristic earned him the nicknamed of the "Whitehouse Iceberg".

#### Benjamin Harrison's Early Life

Benjamin was born and raised on a large 600 acre farm called "*The Point*" near North Bend, Ohio. It was a grand farm for the day. It was comfortable and generously furnished. The farm had been gifted to the family by Benjamin's grandfather, President William Henry Harrison the ninth President of the United States. The President was a learned man and took great pride in the home library he had assembled. He collected books on nearly every subject imaginable.

The Harrison's family tree produced several kin that played active roles in American history. Benjamin's Great-grandfather, also named Benjamin Harrison, served in the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence, and became governor of Virginia.

Benjamin's Grandfather William Henry Harrison, had been appointed governor of the Indiana Territory by Presidents John Adams and then again by Thomas Jefferson and finally becoming the ninth President of the United States in 1841.(2) Benjamin's father John Scott Harrison had served two terms as an Ohio Congressman. Then of course there was Benjamin, who became the twenty-third President.

Ben was one of thirteen children born to John Scott and Elizabeth Harrison, sadly only eight lived to reach maturity. Ben had a relatively comfortable rural upbringing with plenty of hunting, fishing, chopping wood and helping with the animals. He was constantly surrounded by family, so his childhood had been one of security and he developed a strong sense of order and self-assurance. (3)

He was home schooled primarily by his mother, but he had such an unquenchable thirst for knowledge that on occasion a private tutor was employed. He was a deep thinker and liked being alone, generally preferring the company of books to that of other people. He was markedly intelligent and well-disciplined with his self-study. So with his mother's dedicated tutelage, and of course access to his Grandfather's marvelous library, Benjamin acquired a well-rounded education. But still prior to entering college, Benjamin did attend two years at Farmer's College (a prep school in Cincinnati). Sadly, Ben's mother died in August of 1850. He was only seventeen years old at the time and her death was a great loss for him.

A month later he enrolled at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and was accepted as a junior. Although his father had been a moderately prosperous farmer, declining family fortunes wouldn't allow Benjamin to attend one of the more *prestigious Eastern Universities* as had been hoped.

Benjamin's professors at Miami University marveled at Benjamin's intellect. He overcame some of those introverted tendencies by joining the university's debate team. He worked hard and honed his public speaking ability. His professors proudly boasted that "he could hold an audience spellbound." His polished oratory skills would carry him to success in the legal, military and political career fields. (4)

He graduated from Miami University in 1852, married the former Caroline Scott and they made their home in Indianapolis, Indiana. Within a few years they had two children. He was admitted to the Indiana State Bar in 1854 and hung out his law shingle. Within a short time his legal skills and speaking eloquence gained him prominence.

His reputation soon caught the attention of the state Republican Party. They aggressively recruited him to lend his oratory talents to their candidates as a stump speaker. His popularity continued to build and the party urged him to run for Indianapolis city attorney in 1857. He did and he won.

#### Arthur Mellette's Early Life

Arthur Mellette's father Charles was born and raised on a small family farm located in West Virginia. In 1833 at the age of 33, he left the family farm and ventured out to discover some of the world. When he got to central Indiana, a small farm caught his eye near Prairie Township in Henry County. He bought the farm and by 1835 he had met and married a local farmer's daughter by the name of Mary Moore. Together they raised five children of which Arthur Mellette was the middle child. (5)

For the times and location, the Mellette farm was typical of most family farms in that area. It was small, but required everyone to pitch in with the work. At best, the farm provided just

enough to support the family. In fact, most of the families in Henry County had migrated from Virginia, West Virginia or the Carolinas. They were poor and quite dependent on each other with a neighborly and charitable spirit. So, Arthur's childhood was quite different from Benjamin Harrison's.

Like Benjamin, Arthur was also a bright child. He learned how to read independently at age five by following along as his parents and older siblings read aloud to him. He developed into an avid reader on any subject and borrowed books from neighbors for miles around. He attended school in a small single room log cabin about a mile from home. His parents emphasized the importance of education, so he also had a lot of home schooling.

By age ten, he was reading advanced books such as "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*", by Harriet Beecher Stowe. That book disturbed him as he pondered the mere thought of families being separated, traded or sold! He read the book several times and it inspired him to take an interest in politics, civil rights and law. Most adults were amazed that such a young person could have such interests! When he discovered the *Free Soil Party*, he liked their political views and decided to support them. Being a very precocious young lad and would engage in political debate with adults where-ever and when-ever he could instigate one.

When Arthur was twelve years old, a German family moved into a farm close by. They had a son named Jackie. Arthur became intrigued by the German language. When Arthur came across a book of German he persuaded Jackie to help him learn the language. Arthur discovered he not only had an interest in learning foreign languages, but was good at it and able to learn them rather quickly. During his life time he learned several languages.

When Arthur was sixteen years old he attended Marion Academy (*a prep school*) for two years in Marion, Indiana. He realized his dreams for a future would depend on furthering his education. But, family finances were meager, so he planned to earn a teaching certificate and teach country school as a financial means to further his education.

When he began teaching he discovered some serious problems within Indiana's two district school system and the financial corruption that had gone on with the sale of public school lands.(6) This provoked him and eventually led him to enter Indiana politics.

Mellette's college career was similar to that of Harrison's. Mellette impressed the Indiana University professors with his intelligence, public speaking and debating ability. He took room and board at Professor Theophilus Wylie's residence while attending college. He began courting one of the Professor's daughters, Margaret (Maggie). He graduated in 1863 with distinction and entered Law School.

#### The Civil War and Benjamin Harrison

Life was good in Indianapolis for Benjamin, his wife and two children. His legal career was coming along nicely and he was gaining prestige in the state republican party. Although he had no intention of enlisting into the Civil War, in June of 1862, Indiana Republican Governor Oliver Morton asked Benjamin to organize and command the 70<sup>th</sup> Indiana Volunteers Regiment. Benjamin knew it would not be a good career decision to decline the Governor's request. So Benjamin honored the request and was given the rank of Colonel. Oddly, his troops weren't battle tested until two years later at the battle of Resaca in central Georgia. But they fought well enough to earn Benjamin a promotion to the rank of brevet-brigadier general.(7)

## The Civil War and Arthur Mellette

The human drama of the Civil War touched everyone. For every story of sacrifice and devotion to duty, there are other stories of corruption, money grubbing, ambition and double dealing. The Civil War seemed to bring out the best and the worst in people. As battles became more intense, the body count continued mounting. To keep the war effort going, more men were needed to fill the army ranks on both sides. The military draft (*called the Conscription Act*) was first employed in 1862 by the Confederacy. A year later, the Union army shortages forced President Lincoln to follow suit.<sup>(8)</sup> The Civil War was losing public support.

In September of 1864, Mellette was just entering his second year of law school. Word reached University campus that the 140<sup>th</sup> Indiana volunteer Infantry Regiment was recruiting and organizing in a forested area near Indianapolis. Arthur left law school and made the forty mile trip to Indianapolis to enlist.

That afternoon Arthur and Colonel Thomas Brady (*Who would train and command the 140<sup>th</sup> regiment*) met and apparently made a favorable impression on each other. Colonel Brady offered Mellette a commission of lieutenant. Arthur of course readily accepted! Colonel Brady gave Arthur orders to return home attend to any unfinished family business, then return to camp.

When Arthur arrived home, he found his family in great distress and his mother Mary near a nervous breakdown. Arthur's older brother James had been drafted. James' mental and physical health had been impaired from a childhood accident and Mary was certain James would easily be killed in the war.<sup>(9)</sup> After several hours of discussion the Mellette family had to

face the fact that they could not raise the money for a substitute soldier for James'.(10) Having no other solution to the problem, Arthur offered himself as a substitute soldier.

Arthur returned to Colonel Brady's camp hoping he could be released from their enlistment agreement. Brady spent several hours describing to Arthur the unpleasant treatment he would receive as a substitute soldier. Substitute soldiers were not trusted or liked. They had the reputation as deserters, cowards and thieves. Many of them were ex-convicts or had escaped from a prison somewhere. Those found to be trustworthy, were usually not found to be physically or mentally capable of being good soldiers. They were regarded as a detriment to the war effort.

Most Union regiments were volunteers, organized by each state, so nearly everyone was from the same community. Usually they had all been raised together, were related or friends and took great pride in serving in the home regiment. Those substitute soldiers who were assigned to these regiments were regarded as outsiders and were shunned. Anyone wearing the label of substitute soldier was branded as bad or undesirable.

Arthur would learn Colonel Brady was absolutely right. Although Brady sympathized with the Mellette's family dilemma, he certainly disagreed with their solution to the problem. He respected Arthur's dedication to family and released him from his enlistment. Arthur then reported to the Provost Marshall's office as a substitute soldier for James. Arthur did serve honorably, but hated the experience.(11)

### After the War

Benjamin return to Indianapolis after the war and joined a law partnership which was then became known as *Fishback, Porter, and Harrison*. Benjamin's law firm was hired by the State of Indiana to prosecute a retrial of the most sensational and celebrated double homicides in the annals of Marion County. Benjamin's law partners chose him to act as the lead prosecutor. His legal genius was credited with winning the conviction. The massive publicity generated by the case brought him instant public name recognition.(12) Friends and some Republican Party leaders began discussing Benjamin's chances for a run for Indiana's governor's chair in 1872.

When Arthur returned home from the war it was obvious that the life of a substitute soldier had taken its toll. He was physically spent from the disease called "*flux*" or "*quick step*"(13) and mentally burnt out. It took several weeks of recuperation for him to get motivated enough to take an interest in life again. Arthur decided to complete his final year of law school.

### Combining Friendship and Business

During the Civil War Arthur and Colonel Thomas Brady had kept in contact with each other. After the war Brady returned home to Muncie, Indiana and continued his law practice.(*by war's end, Brady had been promoted to Brigadier General, and he was very well connected in Washington D.C.*)

After Arthur completed law school, he and Maggie were married in Bloomington on May 29, 1866 and moved to Muncie. Arthur and Thomas Brady began practicing law together. The next thirteen years were wonderfully successful for them. Their success with the law practice enabled them to purchase the Muncie Times newspaper in 1869. Practicing law and running a

newspaper was nearly too overwhelming for them. But when Brady's close friend, General and now President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Brady as Consul to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, Brady and Arthur decided to close the law practice.

Arthur took on the role as managing editor of the newspaper. His high standards and inspiring editorials elevated the stature of the Muncie Times. It had earned a reputation as the most influential newspaper east of Indianapolis. Arthur dramatically grew the paper's circulation and advertising revenues. He then expanded the plant facilities to include a publishing house. The Muncie Times and Publishing House had become the cornerstone to his personal wealth.

Arthur and Maggie bought a beautiful home on the eastside of Muncie. Builders of the day had developed the eastside by constructing pretentious Queen Anne style houses garnished with gingerbread ornamentation. It was the most fashionable district in the city.

As managing editor of a very reputable newspaper with a large circulation, he had the platform to start crusading for reform in state public education. He wrote several scathing editorials about the corruption in the sale of public school lands and the shameful improvidence of state politicians which led to the poor condition of the State's two district school system. He trumpeted the belief that state government was obligated to establish one standard for supporting, monitoring and regulating education for all public schools across the state.(14)

He was quickly launched into politics by acquiring a huge amount of public support and that drew the favor of the Republican Party. He won some local city and county elections pertaining to education which culminated into winning a seat in the Indiana State House of

Representatives. Although he served only a single term 1873-1875, he had accomplished what he had set out to do. He did not have any aspirations of seeking any more political office. Throughout his life Arthur voiced that this may have been the political accomplishment of which he was most proud.(15)

Through the years Benjamin had lent his talents to the State Republican Party in many ways. As a lawyer, stump speaker, fund raiser, he complied with just about anything asked of him. But for more than a decade he had declined party invitations to run for Governor. Finally he was persuaded to enter the gubernatorial race in 1876. Although he was fully backed by the Republican Party, and of course he had Arthur's support with time, money and a very enthusiastic endorsement from the Muncie Times. But Benjamin really wasn't prepared for the rough and tumble of a political campaign. His Democratic opponent, a populist known as "*Blue Jeans*" Williams, taunted him by referring to Benjamin with a nickname that stuck: "*kid gloves*". Harrison suffered the fate that befalls most stiff, cheerless candidates, he lost.(16)

Arthur and Benjamin joined with several other businessmen in forming a group of financial investors. Collectively this group had wealth and an abundance of business acumen. They focused on investing in young entrepreneurs with good ideas and ambition. The group did well with their investments and also helped in developing economic growth around the State of Indiana.

Life seemed nearly perfect for Arthur, Maggie and their four young sons; that is except for Maggie's health. She had suffered from recurring episodes on consumption since childhood. Doctors hoped she would outgrow these exacerbations, but Indiana's heavy humidity only served to worsen her condition.

1876 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American independence. The Mellettes decided to commemorate the occasion by taking a six week vacation to the Eastern seaboard by train. Celebrations were planned throughout the country. But before they could return home Maggie became sicker than ever! Several doctors were consulted, each declaring that she was terminally ill. Her only chance for survival was to escape the high humidity of Indiana.

Colorado was chosen as a suitable, healthy location for her recuperation. It was the highest State in the Union, offering clean, pure air in a wide variety of environments from which to choose. Denver was decided upon because of the medical care available. The children were left with Maggie's parents at the University. Arthur had good and reliable workers at the newspaper and publishing house, and the investment group would take care of itself. The only treatment for Maggie was lots of sun, fresh air and complete bed rest. Miraculously by September of 1878 Maggie's health was showing signs of improvement. Hopes for her survival were rising.

All Arthur could do was stay at her bedside. He past the time by tending to Maggie's care and he did a lot of reading. Intrigued by what the newspapers were reporting about Dakota Territory, he began thinking about investment opportunities. There was a "gold rush" going on in the Black Hills, and long term dramatic changes in the weather patterns had changed the hot dry American desert of the Dakotas into an agricultural oasis. Bonanza farms in northern Dakota were producing world record crops. Farming success was spreading into southern Dakota and a "land rush" was raging. Bank interest rates had risen as high as 20%. Investment opportunities seemed limitless!

But once again misfortune struck. Arthur received a dreadful telegram informing him that the Muncie Times and Publishing House had burned down. He immediately made arrangements for Maggie's care and returned to Muncie.

Consumed by hopeless and sorrow, Arthur stood staring at the pile of rubble and ash on the corner lot of Washington and Walnut streets. What had been the location of a huge two story building, housing the Muncie Times, A.C. Mellette Printing and Publishing House, and cornerstone of his family's wealth, was gone.

Arthur of course received compassion and support from his many friends. His investment associates began discussing investment possibilities in Dakota Territory. They began developing a strategy to acquire and study as much vital information about the developing areas in Dakota Territory as they could. It was decided that a government land office in the territory would be a good source.

By this time Benjamin was well connected in Washington D.C. and the current President, Rutherford Hayes and Benjamin were good friends. Benjamin felt certain that he could persuade the President to appoint Arthur as a Registrar of Public Lands somewhere in Dakota Territory.

Within two weeks a telegram was sent from President Hayes to Arthur appointing him to open a land office in Springfield, Dakota Territory. Arthur quickly liquidated what assets he had; selling his home, salvaging what equipment he could from the fire. Thomas Brady decided to rebuild the Muncie Times, and he gave Arthur a generous price to help him out.

Having his business affairs in order, investors lined up, and a good paying federal job waiting for him, he collected his sons and headed to Denver. By this time Maggie was much

improved and wanted to be reunited with her children. She felt well enough to be their mother again. Dakota Territory was a huge area, covering 147,712 square miles. Its climate of clean, dry, healthy air and plenty of sunshine offered great healing potential for Maggie.

Arthur had developed a keen political eye in Indiana and it would serve him well in Dakota Territory. In little more than ten years after his arrival he would experience a phenomenal rise from public land office registrar to territorial governor and finally the first governor of South Dakota. His success would be partly due to the nature of a frontier territory experiencing rapid development and partly due to his own abilities as a politician and statesman. However his political and business acumen would be severely tested at a time of great transition.

#### Finally, Statehood!

What did it take to achieve statehood for the Dakotas? Well it took twenty-nine years, ten territorial governors, nine presidents, two territorial capitals and two state capitals and finally dividing the territory in half. But most importantly, it took the friendship between President Benjamin Harrison and Governor Arthur Mellette.

Even though Dakota Territory had completed the requirements for statehood, democratically controlled congress feared Dakota's republican tendencies would cost them majority control in congress. So they successfully blocked all efforts for statehood.

Even though Benjamin Harrison was a native of Ohio, his long-time residency and impressive record as a Civil War veteran, high powered lawyer and loyalty to the Republican Party, allowed him to represent his adopted state of Indiana in the U.S. Senate. Politically speaking; geographically, he remains the only president to have come from Indiana. He had no baggage of corruption to carry; and he promised to crack down on graft. Harrison was a devoutly

religious Presbyterian Elder and that meant as much to him as being President. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1881 by the Indiana state legislature. (17) He served a single term until 1887.

Soon after arriving in Washington D.C., he set his sights on appointments to the two most important committees to Dakota Territory, the committees on Indian Affairs and U.S. Territories. He even went on to chair the committee on U.S. Territories. He hoped to steer legislators towards a Dakota vote for statehood. He was able to achieve that goal in the Senate, but the House of Representatives would not budge. The House clung to the argument that the Constitution declares that new states cannot be created by merely merging or splitting existing states without approval of both the U.S. Congress and the state legislatures. Congress is given the authority to determine the conditions for statehood.(18)

His moderate views as Senator won him the Republican Presidential nomination in 1888. Benjamin's election was less a date with destiny than a turn of fate, albeit one skillfully engineered by the well-oiled Republican machine. The Republicans raised the largest campaign fund in political history up to that time (\$400,000).

His presidential campaign was skillfully focused on winning those states with the most electoral votes and capturing the Presidency through the Electoral College. Democratic incumbent President Grover Cleveland actually won the popular vote with 90,628 more votes than Harrison.

Plenty of prominent businessmen liked what Senator Harrison was proposing for the Republican Party platform. The Republicans campaigned for protective tariffs, espousing

doctrines of nationalism and active governmental intervention to promote the pensions of Civil War veterans and reforming civil service.

Benjamin Harrison became the twenty-third President of the United States and on his political coattails rode enough congressional election victories for the Republicans to gain control of the House and Senate. Statehood was then assured for the Dakotas.

Accepting the inevitable, on February 22, 1889, President Cleveland signed the Omnibus Bill that authorized preparing the Dakotas for statehood. When President Harrison signed the Enabling Act it authorized Dakota Territory to divide into North and South Dakota. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1889, seven days after President Harrison was inaugurated, he appointed Mellette the tenth and final governor of Dakota Territory. Mellette's appointment came with instructions to oversee the dividing of the territory into two states, and that all requirements for statehood were met by both states. Upon completion of these duties, Mellette was to submit a fully detailed report on the "state of the territory" to the Secretary of the Interior.

It took Territorial Governor Mellette a little over eight months to complete that assignment and on November 2, 1889 North and South Dakota were admitted to the Union, along with Montana and Washington State. It was the largest block of states to ever be admitted at one time. John Miller was elected as the first Governor of North Dakota and Arthur Mellette of South Dakota.

## End Notes

1. Phi Delta Theta , also known as Phi Delta or the Phis, is an international social fraternity founded at Miami University in 1848 and headquartered in Oxford, Ohio. The fraternity has about 185 active chapters and colonies in over 43 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces and has initiated more than 251,000 men between 1848 and 2014. There are over 142,000 living alumni. Chartered house corporations own more than 120 houses valued at \$80 million. There are nearly 100 recognized alumni clubs across the U.S. and Canada. Some of the well-known members: President Benjamin Harrison, Governor Arthur Mellette, Vice President Adlai Stevenson, Baseball Hall of Fame member Lou Gehrig, actor Burt Reynolds, architect Frank Lloyd Wright and astronaut Neil Armstrong.
2. William Henry Harrison nicknamed “Old Tippecanoe”, is best remembered for his military exploits. Benjamin Harrison was just seven years old in 1841, when his grandfather became the ninth President of the party of the United States. He was the first President to die in office. In the one month that his administration lasted, Harrison appointed a strong cabinet, led by Secretary of State Daniel Webster, and summoned a special session of Congress to remedy the economy. Harrison’s tragic death robbed the American people of their chosen leader and the Whig Party of the fruits of his triumph. Harrison was succeeded by his vice-president, John Tyler, who quickly alienated the Party that had elected him. “To The Best of My Ability” The American Presidents, Pp 72, General Editor James M. McPherson. Published in the United States by Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc. 95 Madison Ave., New York, New York 10016
3. Ibid.
4. Education, background of early training. Pp. 10-11, 25-28 “Benjamin Harrison, *Hoosier Warrior*” by Harry J. Sievers, Published by American Political Biography Press Newtown, CT Copyright 1996 and 2007
5. “...And the Last Shall be First” by John Timm Pp.1
6. Transcript of biographical sketch of Arthur Calvin Mellette by Margaret Mellette in 1908. Arthur C. Mellette papers South Dakota State Historical Society archives Pierre, South Dakota.
7. Harrison’s military service was often interrupted by Republican Party bosses who summoned him home to campaign for local candidates, a widespread republican practice. After the battle of Resaca other military engagements included: the Battle of New Hope Church, Kennesaw Mountain, and Siege at Atlanta, Sherman’s March to the Sea, the Carolina’s Campaign and the Battle at Bentonville. “To the Best of My Ability, *The American Presidents Pp. 169.*

8. Conscription Act-The length of the Civil War was dragging on longer than anyone anticipated. Growing weariness was sapping the enthusiasm for preserving the Union, much less to free slaves. The costs and casualties were high, and the general public was discontent with the way the war was being waged. To keep the war effort going, more men were needed to fill army ranks on both sides. As tensions rose, draft riots broke out in several cities. In July of 1863 riots erupted throughout New York City. African Americans and army stations were targeted by rioters. Many rioters were immigrants and wanted no part of a war that would free slaves to compete with them in the job market. Eventually, Union soldiers fresh from the Battle of Gettysburg, were sent to restore order. In the end, more than 1000 people were killed or wounded. *"A Peoples History of the United States"*, by Howard Zinn. Pp. 185-186 Harper and Rowe Publishers, 1980.
9. Farming was hard work and even a small farm had plenty of it to do. Charles Mellette (*Arthur's father*) was laid up for a period of time due to an illness thought to have been brought on by overheating and overwork. His impairment restricted his ability to do laboring work. He began engaging in distilling and selling moonshine. It was a profitable and common undertaking in that part of Indiana. It all came to a sudden stop though when James (*only a toddler then*) got into the moonshine went into convulsions and nearly died! The incident did take a toll on the youngster's mental and physical well-being. *"1908 Biographical Sketch of Arthur Mellette"* by Margaret Mellette, South Dakota Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.
10. In general, the *Civil War Substitute soldiers system* was a shameful scheme that did great harm to the Union military effort. Any draftee could hire a substitute (*if he could find one*) gaining a permanent exemption from military service. On the whole this practice brought the worst kind of man in to the army. It created the very corrupt industry of the *"substitute draftee broker"*. These brokers, for the price of \$1,000, would locate substitutes for potential draftees. More often than not these brokers would engage in finding men who had just been released from prison or had escaped from prison or who were mental and/or physical wrecks as substitutes. This loathsome and disgusting practice often resorted to the use of bribes to *"persuade"* government officials to accept these men. As could be predicted, most substitutes were incompetent or unscrupulous soldiers who would take their \$300 and then became deserters or were just not capable of being soldiers which did not improve the quality of the Union Army. Anyone who wore the label of *"substitute soldier"* was despised by the regular soldiers.
11. *"The Civil War Diary of Arthur Mellette"*, revised edition, edited by Gerald W. Wolff.
12. The calamity of the first trial involved issues ranging from suddenly missing witnesses to perjury and jury tampering. J.P. Dunn, *"History of Greater Indianapolis"*, I, 59 ff. An enterprising subscription book publisher, A.C. Roach,

- issued in pamphlet form the history of *"The Cold Springs Tragedy"*, of which the first edition of 8,000 copies sold out within a week; ten days later another 20,000 copies were nearly exhausted and a third edition of 100,000 was issued. A copy of this pamphlet is still among the holdings of the Indiana State Library. The first trial was declared a mistrial. The second trial is when the law firm of *Fishback, Porter and Harrison* were hired by the State of Indiana to handle the prosecution.
13. Army physicians used the term *"flux"* when referring to the many bowel ailments. More men died from bowel disorders than were killed in battle, Soldiers referred to it as *"quick step"* and mentioned it in their letters home more often than any other ailment. Living conditions were unimaginably unsanitary.
  14. Most country school teachers were local people who were poorly educated, poorly paid and less than a third of them had four years of education beyond the eighth grade. Teaching certificates were obtained by attending a teacher's institute at the nearest county courthouse. The course usually ran from one to four weeks. The quality of education provided to the urban communities was far superior to that provided to rural communities. This two district school system was shamefully unfair and unequal. The lack of uniformity among the townships in school affairs was primarily due to the absence of central county supervision and the improvidence of the state's politicians. This enabled land sharks and local school officers to concoct unscrupulous plans to sell public school lands too cheaply, sometimes as low as 41.25 - \$2.50 per acre. "Transcripts of Biographical sketch of Arthur Mellette" by Margaret Mellette in 1908. Arthur C. Mellette papers, South Dakota State historical archives in Pierre, South Dakota.
  15. Arthur served as county examiner for prospective teachers in Delaware County. In November of 1869, he formed a society known as the Educational Association, a volunteer group organized for the mutual benefit of education and he served as its president. In 1870 he ran for superintendent of the Delaware County Schools and was elected. "Kemper's History of Delaware County", Muncie Public Library, Local History and Genealogy Center, 210 S. Jefferson St., Muncie, Indiana 47305
  16. "To The Best of My Ability" *The American Presidents*, By James M. McPherson (General Editor) Pp168-174 The Society of American Historians. Published by Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc., 95 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
  17. Harrison's was elected to the U.S. Senate by the Indiana state legislature. His election was prior to the passage of the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment on May 31, 1913, which established direct election of U.S. Senators by popular vote.
  18. "The Congress shall have the power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States..." U.S. Constitution, *Article IV, Section 3, clause 2.*

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## Do Native American People Have a Place in the Emerging Midwestern Historical Narrative or Do They Belong to the West Alone?

David S. Trask

Proponents for the elevation of Midwestern regional studies to an influential academic status base their work on several assumptions. They posit a) the importance of the year 1890 in the periodization of the region and b) the role of the Missouri River in defining the western edge of that region at least for South Dakota. Taken together, these two assumptions lead to a third: that Native Americans are not an important topic of study in the Midwest after 1890 because of the impact of the Wounded Knee massacre and the nineteenth century confinement of the Sioux Indians to areas west of the Missouri River by 1890. Collectively these arguments place Native Americans beyond the scope of Midwestern history.

The argument as presented by Jon Lauck, a leader in the movement to revitalize the academic standing of the Midwest, argues that settlers of eastern Dakota Territory were overwhelmingly white Midwesterners and that “Following the 1858 Yankton Treaty and the Dakota Conflict of 1862 in southern Minnesota, most of the Sioux bands moved west to the Missouri River and ceased to be a significant presence in eastern Dakota.”<sup>271</sup> Furthermore he believes that a scholarly focus on the “Other” diverts attention from more important historical themes and actors; the corollary of his concern is that the decline of a national sense of value for Midwestern history was caused by this “off-center” focus among historians.<sup>272</sup>

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271 “The Foundations of Political Culture in East River South Dakota”, 15-42 in Jon K. Lauck, John E. Miller, & Donald C. Simmons, (eds.), *The Plains Political Tradition Essays on South Dakota Political Culture* (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2011), 18.

272 Jon K. Lauck, *The Lost Region Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press 2013) 76-77. An example of Lauck’s treatment of South Dakota’s original residents appears in his analysis of the

This paper corrects this approach. It argues that any historical study of the Midwest must include Native Americans as active participants throughout. While it is natural for historians and other analysts to demarcate their subjects in space and time, these divisions must accommodate the lives of people on the ground and in the era. The Lakota people were not wiped out at Wounded Knee and the Dakotas did not become farmers, start new lives in sod houses and blend into the landscape down the road from western European immigrant groups. Assimilation, the effort to “kill the Indian to save the man” did not work out as imagined. Instead of banishing the Sioux to the historical past by 1890, historians of the Midwest need to look at the lives which these people lived after the end of military encounters and once the lands were divided up. We need to look beyond the battle lines to find the story lines. And fit these folks into the regional stories of the Midwest.

### **1890 is not a useful chronological dividing line**

First we need to examine the problems with the use of the year 1890 as a marker for organizing the historical past. Frederick Jackson Turner identified that date as a major turning point in American history. For students of the American West that year marked the “end” of the frontier in American development, the end of the “wild west” and the triumph of agriculture over Nature. His position was based on data from the 1890 census holding that the frontier, a constant feature of American life from the origins of the nation, had disappeared. Many

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state’s political culture where offers little on the Sioux presence in the state. He notes that South Dakota was “cut from the wide swath of land . . . that Thomas Jefferson bought from Napoleon in 1803 and it bears a heavy Jeffersonian imprint.” (159) There is no mention of the imprint present then or present now of Native Americans. His only direct reference to Native Americans is that they have come to vote strongly Democratic in this Republican state as the result of Attorney General William Janklow’s efforts against the American Indian Movement occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973. (177) Jon Lauck, John E. Miller and Edward Hogan, “Historical Musings The Contour of South Dakota Political Culture”, *South Dakota History* (Summer, 2004), 157-178.

historians have subsequently noted that the “frontier” returned in the 1900 census and that the depopulation of portions of the Great Plains in recent decades marks the return of frontier conditions if not frontier life in the western Midwest and the West. While these commonplace observations are important for the study of American regions, they do not get to the core of the problems associated with the year 1890, a date which figures prominently in the current effort to define the Midwest as a region.

For the Midwest, the West and South Dakota the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 marks a decisive divide between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. That so-called battle marked the end of the Indian Wars in the west. A second milestone from almost the same moment intensifies the importance of the late nineteenth century: the formal initiation of land allotment through the Dawes Act in 1887 and the related dissolution of the Great Sioux Reservation into a number of smaller reserves in 1889. These actions suggest the start of Sioux movement down the road to farming and ranching and at least theoretically into the agrarian world of the Midwest. These events also made vast acreages of former reservation land available to pioneer settlement. In short this was the moment when Americans mentally could switch from a national narrative focused on the Wild West to the pastoral story of “little house on the prairie” even as the nation itself continued to march into an urban, industrial world. This represented a moment of triumph in American history as “wasteland”, so-called because the economic value of land which was going to waste was “redeemed” by being put to commercial use.

The first step toward returning Native American people to the Midwestern narrative is to re-evaluate and adjust traditional, Turnerian frontier chronology. The statistical measure of

the end of the frontier more than two residents per square mile was momentary; it reappeared in 1900 as a new wave of western settlement proceeded apace until World War I.<sup>273</sup> Phillip Deloria recently devised a different chronology centered on the 1830s. Prior to that decade Native Americans had been treated as obstructions to westward expansion who had to be pressed to sign treaties requiring them to vacate desirable lands in favor of distant spaces where they were out of the way and beyond the terrain that would be needed in the foreseeable future to accommodate settlement. The decisive change was Chief Justice John Marshall's decision in the 1831 case of *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* labelling Indian tribes as domestic, dependent nations. This judgement redefined Native Americans as wards of the national government which also served as their guardians. According to Deloria Indians became people who could be contained and then incorporated into American culture. <sup>274</sup> In practical terms this decision created the expectation that Americans would educate, civilize, and Christianize "their" Indian wards, thereby opening the door to policies such as Grant's Peace Policy and allotment. This approach still enabled Americans to acquire western lands but in a way that could be labelled "humane" and "uplifting". This approach does not divide U. S. – Indian relations at an inappropriate place historically speaking.

The Deloria approach treats all of the elements of white-Indian relations including westward expansion from the mid-nineteenth century onward as a single set of actions spanning an entire time sequence and discourages historians from narrating a portion of a historical relationship as the whole of history. Furthermore it opens the door to the realization

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273 This reality is underscored for South Dakota in Paula Nelson, *After the West Was Won Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900-1917* [Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986].

274 Philip J. Deloria, "From Nation to Neighborhood: Land, Policy, Culture, Colonialism, and Empire in U. S. – Indian Relations" in James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman & Michael O'Malley (eds.), *The Cultural Turn in U. S. History Past, Present & Future* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 356.

that white – Indian relations have been continuous rather than episodic. There wasn't a simple, pre-contact story of idyllic Indian life followed by battles which cleared out Indians preparatory to full scale white settlement. There was no "end of history" for Native Americans in 1890.

A further disadvantage of Turnerian periodization is that it implies that many historical themes present prior to 1890 had been resolved by 1890 and that events present after that chronological divide can be seen as unique to the post-1890 era. Turner did not apply the concept to white-Indian relations. His concern was social unrest. He feared that the "end" of the frontier meant the loss, going forward, of a "safety valve" which he believed had saved the United States from the frequent turmoil which plagued Europe. According to his safety value theory, in economic downturns Americans in cities were drawn west to the cheap land of the frontier rather than resorting to the violence which accompanied the frustrations of the lack of opportunity in cities. Turner viewed with trepidation the "fact" that the nation was entering a world more vulnerable to urban unrest but many historians have applied the "closing of the frontier" meme to the whole of American history.

The power of the historical exclamation point of 1890 has affected our understanding of Native Americans in the Midwest and West. The aftermath for the Sioux of military defeat is largely forgotten. Survivors of "Wounded Knee" erected a monument at the mass burial site "In Memory of the Chief Big Foot Massacre" in 1903 even as national society saw the battle as the final triumph of civilization over savagery. Around "Indian Country" the battle called into question the value and sincerity of Christianity when its practitioners slaughtered women and children. The Indian use of "massacre" in the Chief Big Foot Memorial" reversed the white use of "massacre" to describe the demise of Custer at the Little Big Horn. For the Dakotas and

Lakota's the memorial became a pilgrimage site which kept alive their tie to the past and served as a reminder of white savagery.<sup>275</sup>

Led by Dewey Beard (also known as Chief Iron Hail), the Wounded Knee survivors worked through the 1930s to gain national compensation for their losses. One assertion of Indian concerns occurred in 1927 when President Calvin Coolidge visited the Black Hills and the Pine Ridge Reservation as part of a visit to signal the start of work at Mt. Rushmore. While at Pine Ridge he received but did not comment on a memorial proclaiming Sioux ownership of the Black Hills. While Wounded Knee was apparently not mentioned at that time, four years later Beard and others proclaimed the creation of the Survivors of Wounded Knee Massacre and began annual gatherings at the massacre site. Their goal was to convince Congress to provide compensation for their 1890 losses. Working closely with Congressman Francis Case and with the support of John Collier of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Beard and his dwindling band of Wounded Knee survivors labored diligently on behalf of their claims until the start of U. S. involvement in World War II when the issue lost all traction amidst war preparations. Case's postwar efforts to revive the compensation bill got nowhere. The wartime need for a bombing range cost the Pine Ridge reservation of a slice of land that included Dewey Beard's own allotment. The compensation was not enough for him to purchase a replacement property that could support him financially. Dewey Beard moved to Rapid City and lived on government assistance; he died in 1955.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> David Grua, "In Memory of the Chief Big Foot Massacre': The Wounded Knee Survivors and the Politics of Memory", *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI (Spring, 2015), 31-51.

<sup>276</sup> Jerome Greene, *American Carnage Wounded Knee 1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 372-377.

The notion of the finality of the year 1890 can lead people to create and pass along ahistorical tales as true. This tendency likely underlay John G. Neihardt's invention of the final quotation attributed to Wounded Knee survivor Black Elk in *Black Elk Speaks*: "There is no center any longer and the sacred tree is dead." In reality the transcripts reveal that Black Elk's concluding statement to Neihardt in 1931 was "Two years later I was married."<sup>277</sup> His "understanding" of the world of 1890 as shattered was a white man's addition to the story.

### **The Missouri River Boundary**

Scholars cannot use the presence or absence of Indians to differentiate between the two areas. The Midwest was not devoid of Native Americans after 1890; there was a robust and continuing presence of the regions original residents throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. Some never left the region. The use of the Missouri River as a regional boundary as well as the reliance on Turnerian chronology to define time cannot restrict all Indians to only one side of each of these two artificial boundaries. It is better to keep them in the story.

Examples abound of Native Americans living east of the Missouri River after 1890. The Dakota refugees of the brief 1862 summer war did not relocate permanently in the "west". After they were released from Fort Snelling, they relocated to the Crow Creek reservation on the eastern bank of the Missouri River in 1863 before moving on to their final home on the Santee Reservation east of the mouth of the Niobrara River. They were joined there by Dakotas who had been consigned to prison in Davenport, Iowa. Some Dakotas subsequently relocated

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<sup>277</sup> Jeffrey Ostler presents this anecdote in *The Plains Sioux and U. S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 361. His footnote #1 on that page provides a thorough review of reactions to this passage in *Black Elk Speaks*.

to unoccupied land near Flandreau on the Big Sioux River while others slowly drifted back to the Minnesota River where many still live today. 278

Northern regions of Minnesota and Wisconsin still contain numerous reservations which were and are contested sites of Indian identity and economic survival. One of these settlements containing the full tapestry of this life is the conservative Anishinaabeg community of the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota as well as mixed blood cultural mediators. The early twenty-first century experience of life on these reservations, especially east of White Earth at Leech Lake, is recounted by David Treuer. 279

A final example connects the West and Midwest; it is the re-occupation of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1973. This action was initiated by the American Indian Movement which grew out of meetings among urban Indians in Minneapolis. Prior to the 71 day siege at Wounded Knee the group took part in the 1969-1971 seizure of Alcatraz prison and the “trail of broken treaties” demonstration in Washington, D. C. in October 1972. Many of the AIM members were members of South Dakota reservations.<sup>280</sup> The Midwest and the West, however demarcated, were home to Native Americans before and after 1890.

### **New Storylines in Midwestern/Western History**

The study of the Midwest with regard to native peoples requires new storylines. This paper has offered some guidelines for what these storylines should look like. The first step is to rethink the time and space dimensions of the Midwest to account for the continuing presence

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279 For turn of the twentieth century issues see Melissa Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). For early twenty-first century life see David Treuer, *Rez Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2012).

280 <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/10/occupy-wounded-knee-a-71-day-siege-and-a-forgotten-civil-rights-movement/263998/> Accessed April 3, 2015.

of native peoples. They were never fully banished from the land and many returned to their old homelands later. Secondly, historians must abandon traditional tales of the white-Indian relationship in dualistic stereotypes such as savagery and civilization, primitive and advanced, superstitious and rational/analytical, or treacherous and humane. Reliance on the year 1890 as a full stop in the historical development of the United States must also be discarded. Its use establishes war as an essential prerequisite for pioneer settlement. This is unfortunate because pioneer settlement rose from complex interactions across cultures including many activities other than war. Furthermore historians now have a wide-ranging body of studies of Indian life pre- and post-1890 to supplement the historical studies of individual regions including the Midwest. It is not appropriate to write Indians out of the story of the Midwest (or the West) and justify their subsequent “absence” from the narrative as a correction for the prior, “one-sided” inclusion of Native Americans in historical studies as the “Other”.<sup>281</sup> One solution to this need is to focus on “collaboration” in all of its forms as a valuable storyline that adds complexity and richness to the narrative of traditional studies.

Collaboration is a flexible term which can cover a variety of working relationships within and between groups of people.<sup>282</sup> It can mean something as simple as two or more people or groups working together on a project that is of common importance for all of them. In the traditional history of the Midwest and West it can be applied to traditional activities among neighbors such as barn raisings or threshing bees. This paper focuses on collaboration in a more specialized way--on collaboration that occurs between groups across ethnic boundaries—

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<sup>281</sup> Lauck, *The Lost Region*, 76-77.

<sup>282</sup> I used a somewhat narrower definition of collaboration in David S. Trask, “Episcopal Missionaries on the Santee and Yankton Reservations: Cross-Cultural Collaboration and President Grant’s Peace Policy”, *Great Plains Quarterly* (Spring, 2013) 87-101.

which can still represent the pursuit of mutually desirable goals. There are other meanings for the term. In the European combat theater of World War II the term encapsulated the scorn directed at those residents of occupied France who “collaborated” with the Germans to facilitate the achievement of tasks valued only by the German occupiers. Individual payoffs for French citizens such as survival were attained by violating the solidarity of the French as a group. In this sense the term is pejorative; the Frenchmen involved in this activity were guilty of treason with respect to other French citizens. The word can also apply to colonial relationships where the relative power of different groups is also inherently unequal. This condition does not prevent the less powerful from skillfully manipulating events toward their own goals while seeming to follow the lead and support the goals of the more powerful. Conversely the more powerful party in a collaborative arrangement can betray the less powerful “partner” when it seems advantageous.<sup>283</sup>

This paper looks at two settings of collaboration: 1) the start of the 1862 Dakota War was tied in many ways to the breakdown of fictive relations between Native Americans and whites along the Minnesota River reservation of the Dakotas which formed the backdrop for the Dakota War of 1862. A focus on national Indian policy and its breakdown in administration gains complexity when scholars add a focus on the deterioration of collaboration among local residents. 2) Reports of local activities directed toward achieving the “civilization” and Christianization of the Sioux by Episcopal missionaries are filled with reports of partnership and collaboration in the inculcation of the mainstream values of the United States. While these partnerships are presented in the language of collaboration, it is clear that many clergy had

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283 David Trask, “Episcopal Missionaries on the Santee and Yankton Reservations: Cross-Cultural Collaboration and President Grant’s Peace Policy,” *Great Plains Quarterly* (Spring, 2013), 87-101, esp. 90-91

difficulty recognizing and accepting the implications of true partnership between Episcopal clergy and their Native American clergy-in-training. The focus of this analysis is the work of the Episcopal Church in the denomination's Niobrara jurisdiction. It was established in Dakota Territory following the settlement of the refugees from the Minnesota War and other tribal groups along the Missouri River.

### **Breakdown of Collaboration and the Sioux War of 1862**

The traditional analysis of the origins of the Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota revolves around the failure of the U. S. government to live up to its treaty obligations to supply annual annuities. Admittedly part of the government's challenge was complicated by the need to finance the Civil War which took precedence financially over treaty promises. Exacerbating factors included the Indian agent, Thomas Galbraith, who was regarded by people at the time and historians later as incompetent in his dealings with his charges. The anti-civilization faction among the Dakota used these conditions to justify their attacks on white settlers. There were, of course, other factors in the mix but failures of the U. S. government hold center stage in the analysis of causes. The six week war in August and September of 1862 had catastrophic consequences. It resulted in approximately 500 total deaths, the flight westward of about 3,000 Dakotas, 1,700 imprisonments of both hostile and friendly Indians, and 38 Sioux deaths by hanging for killing civilians or assaulting women.<sup>284</sup>

Gary Clayton Anderson finds the decisive causes of the conflict in the breakdown of fictive kinship ties between whites and Dakotas. Fictive kinship is a constructed relationship

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<sup>284</sup> Guy Gibbon, *The Sioux The Dakota and Lakota Nations* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2003) 109-111. See also Roy Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux United States Indian Policy on Trial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 109-132.

which enhances the ability of practitioners to work with outsiders without resort to conflict. In contrast to kinship established by blood or a legal relationship such as marriage, “fictive kinship” denotes a relationship established voluntarily among non-relatives which nonetheless includes expected, reciprocal behavior, often reaffirmed by gifts or the sharing of resources, in order to be maintained. Examples from Native American studies includes non-marital ties established by trappers and traders to facilitate direct dealing with tribes.<sup>285</sup>

In Minnesota Euro-American settlers and Dakotas exchanged resources such as game for grain, use of farm equipment for firewood or needed specialized knowledge shared freely when helpful. This description should not be taken to describe a weekend “swap meet”; the exchanges would occur as a series of one way acts of assistance or sharing with the assumption of reciprocity later. The custom of fictive kin promoted peaceful and beneficial relations between Euro-Americans and neighboring Dakotas until the last years before the Dakota War. While Euro-American references to the “Great Father” in Washington reflected the working assumption that native people were child-like, for the Dakotas the term reflected a relationship of equals that included clear obligations and expectations for everyone involved. It is not clear the extent to which white settlers themselves were aware of Dakota customs of kinship; they may simply have regarded their good working relationships as friendship pure and simple or perhaps as proof of native people being drawn to the more “advanced” Euro-American culture. While Anderson finds the immediate causes of the 1862 war in the failure of the government to deliver annuity goods in a timely way (which also represents a breakdown in the obligation of

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<sup>285</sup>Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984, 1997)

fictive kin to one another), he attributes the real causes of the 1862 “outbreak” of war to changing white attitudes toward the “kinship” bonds which had earlier sustained their lives and the peace. In his view these relationships deteriorated among whites as their ability to make it on “their own” became more established. He holds that “whites succumbed to the immensely strong urge to impose the cultural conformity that dominated the American frontier experience”. Where white settlers might refer to the Dakotas as “friends”, within the Indian community these relationships represented a binding set of obligations that reached well beyond the casual ties among people.<sup>286</sup> Kinship considerations were as important if not more important than the consistent failure of Congress to appropriate funds for promised Indian annuities which made the arrival of goods extremely tardy. From the point of view of kinship the “Great Father”, like his white children, was failing to live up to his end of the fictive kinship bargain. Anderson also notes that there was deep conflict within the Dakotas between those attempting to restore traditional lifeways and those settling into a world constructed of both Dakota and settler practices.

From this perspective the 1862 war does not represent the culmination of a long period of simmering hostility, the notion of fictive kinship points toward the occasional breakdown of comity occasioned by violations of expectation by kin after long periods of peaceful, collaborative relations. The cause of these violations came at the moment when Euro-Americans saw personal advantage in foregoing the requirements of friendships with Native

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<sup>286</sup> Raymond DeMallie, “Kinship and Biology In Sioux Culture” in Raymond DeMallie and Alfonso Ortiz, *North American Indian Anthropology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 125-146, esp. 142.

Americans when they saw the opportunity for personal gain. “Gain” in this sense could mean land, personal position, government demands, or prestige.<sup>287</sup>

The Dakota War presents a clear case of the value of the Deloria substitution of the year 1831 for 1890, and *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* for the closing of the frontier. The new analytical framework starts with a focus on settlement rather than conflict. Instead of the West as the setting for war and destruction, the theme of collaboration redirects attention from war, government actions and troublesome natives to the values and dreams of settlers and the impacts of their actions. This enriches and complicates the storylines of Midwestern and Western history and underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of Indian-white relations than the story of the West as narrated in the popular media. For settlers the outbreak of war represented a breakdown of friendship while for the Dakota the cause was a violation of fundamental relationships. The longstanding fictive relationships that tied Dakotas and Euro-Americans together were ended when economic advantages turned reciprocity into thoughts of material gain. Traditional accounts have emphasized the failure of the U. S. government to meet its treaty obligations.<sup>288</sup>

The interaction between Native Americans and white settlers in Minnesota provides a good Midwestern historical example of the importance of presenting events as a unified whole. Gary Clayton Anderson’s analysis of fictive relations between white settlers and the Dakota Sioux in the two centuries prior to 1862 illustrates the operations of Dakota kinship practices. These ties transformed the area’s residents, both white and Dakota, into each other’s fictive kin who collaborated peacefully on a broad range of activities to build functioning interethnic

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<sup>287</sup> Anderson, 280

<sup>288</sup> Anderson, 261-280.

settlements. The white retreat from the obligations of these relationships, according to Anderson, help explain the outbreak of the 1862 Dakota War in Minnesota.

It is not clear if white settlers were aware of the web of Indian relationships that benefitted their daily lives along the Minnesota River next to the Dakota reserves. Whites who were saved by Dakotas during the 1862 war attributed their rescue to their friendships with the Dakotas without reference to the reciprocity lying at the core of fictive kin. It is likely that most whites regarded their interactions with Native Americans as proof that their Indian neighbors were adopting Euro-American values and practices which whites characterized as movement along the road to “assimilation.

The lack of awareness of fictive kinship likely also underlay settler reactions to the experiences of Sarah Wakefield who spent six weeks as a captive of Chaska, a Dakota chief during the 1862 war.<sup>289</sup> Her medical doctor husband had treated the illnesses and physical injuries of Dakotas prior to the outbreak; this earned her the protection which may have kept her alive.<sup>290</sup> The women of Chaska’s camp worked diligently to see that she and other captive white women were protected residents of the camp. In a moment of turmoil at the camp Chaska’s grandfather led Wakefield away from the village and secreted her in a haystack.<sup>291</sup> Ms. Wakefield was subsequently excoriated for speaking out on behalf of Chaska who was among the 39 Indians ultimately slated for execution by the U. S. Army after President Lincoln pared down the execution list from its initial 303 who had been found guilty of crimes against settlers in a series of incredibly short trials. Her solicitude for her captor was beyond the pale

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<sup>289</sup> Sarah Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees: A Narrative of Indian Captivity* ed., June Namias (Norman: “Red River Books”; University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).; Duane Schultz, *Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1992).

<sup>290</sup> Anderson, 265.

<sup>291</sup> Schultz, 168.

for many whites. Chaska's execution occurred when the Army confused Chaska with Chaskadon, a man who had killed a pregnant woman and cut the fetus out of her body. The treatment received during captivity by Ms. Wakefield was consistent with the obligations of fictive kinship. She reported that "the world does the Indians a great injustice when they say they *saved persons only for selfish reasons*.<sup>292</sup>

### **Episcopal Missionary Collaboration**

The Minnesota War resulted in the expulsion of the Dakotas from Minnesota. If the Minnesota War of 1862 can be seen as the breakdown of the collaborative relationships based on fictive relations, the subsequent collaboration of the Sioux with missionaries of the Episcopal Church involved a long series of collaborations in the search to find ways to live with or change the demands of federal policy. While these partnerships sometimes reached mutually beneficial outcomes, they often disappointed Native Americans when white clergy went against their Indian parishioners at those moments when white clergy placed a higher value on their relationships with Indian agents and the demands of national policy. Taken together these examples replace the war and banishment model of early western settlement with a variety of struggles waged by people in search of ways to carry out familiar life tasks. If this is true, the history of the Midwest becomes in part the story of ongoing efforts to work with others to advance small group goals rather than a shared conception of the common good.

The white Episcopal clergy who followed the Minnesota refugees to Dakota Territory sought to continue a missionary collaboration which was formalized by the denomination's

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<sup>292</sup> Wakefield, 110.

assignment under President Grant's Peace Plan.<sup>293</sup> The goal of the plan was to advance the "civilization" and Christianization of Native Americans to the point where the assimilation of Indians into national society would end the "Indian problem". Motives for Indian participation in this religious enterprise included, in some cases, the replacement of old ways of life that were incompatible with the new realities of life in their homeland. In other cases it was the effort to blend traditional values and relationships within a general American framework while still preserving a sense of continuity between old and new worlds. There were also less comprehensive motives. Agent and missionaries controlled the distribution of annuities, access to cash paying jobs, and privileges such as passes to visit relatives on other reservations. In addition some number of Native Americans simply evaded assimilation activities by avoiding the settings of church activity.

Early collaboration after the Dakota exile revolved around the ambitions of missionary Samuel Hinman and relationships dating back to the Minnesota War. Hinamn, an orphan from Connecticut, showed up on the doorstep of Minnesota's Bishop Benjamin Whipple to attend his seminary in Faribault in 1860. After enrolling, Hinman was induced to start Sunday services with local Indians; he quickly made himself indispensable. He married a white woman who shared his missionary calling, became proficient in the Dakota language and was assigned to a mission along the Minnesota River. When the 1862 War began he had to flee his reservation mission home along with the rest of the white community. Unlike other whites he then joined the Dakotas imprisoned at Ft. Snelling near St. Paul, baptized many of the prisoners and then

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<sup>293</sup> The central background study of the relationship between the Sioux and the Episcopal Church is Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, *That They May Have Life The Episcopal Church in South Dakota, 1859-1976* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977). A book of lesser value for South Dakota but which addresses the full spectrum of the denomination's approach to Native Americans, Owanah Anderson, *400 Years Anglican/Episcopal Missions Among American Indians* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1997).

accompanied them on their steamboat trip to the Crow Creek Reservation in Dakota Territory on the eastern bank of the Missouri River. He subsequently accompanied the relocating Dakotas to their permanent reservation on the south bank of the Missouri adjacent to the Dakota Territory border. While these activities firmly established his standing as a friend of the Indians, Hinman's missionary diligence contained character flaws unknown to his eastern supporters.

Judging the living conditions at Crow Creek to be too harsh for a white lady, he sent his wife home to Minnesota while he himself wintered with his mission charges. It would later be claimed that his close relationships with some Dakota women resulted in a case of syphilis which he passed on to his wife who died of a "mysterious", lingering malady in 1876. The symptoms of this illness were consistent with a diagnosis of syphilis; some in the mission community referred to her sickness as a "loathsome disease", a frequent synonym for venereal disease. It was also rumored that Rev. Hinman's good relations with the Dakotas were the result of the fact that he knew which of his parishioners had killed whites in 1862 and that he would turn them in to the Army if they got in his way.

Hinman was a man at ease in two different worlds but he played both sides of the street. His knowledge of the world of Indians enabled him to build a career among influential national leaders of the Episcopal Church "back East". His standing as a protégé of Bishop Whipple enabled him to attract donations from eastern supporters to build a lavish house and church on the Santee Reservation. The structure was adorned with turrets and other architectural fillips with the result that the mission buildings earned the informal name, "Hinman's folly". These spending priorities attracted disapproval within the denomination's

hierarchy. On the other hand his eastern connections included William Welsh who had close ties to the proponents of the Peace Plan. This made him the “go to guy” for westerners seeking connections in the East. Native Americans, however, may have looked askance at Hinman’s work as a translator at numerous Army-Indian negotiations including those for the 1868 treaty.<sup>294</sup>

Grant’s policy gave the Episcopal Church a central role on seven reservations in Dakota Territory.<sup>295</sup> To meet that responsibility the church created a new jurisdiction, the Niobrara, named after the river that ran along the southern edge of Dakota Territory adjacent to Hinman’s Santee Reservation home with the Dakotas. To promote his nomination for Niobrara bishop, he preemptively established the Niobrara Deanery to underscore his ability to foster collaboration between whites and Indians. This ability would be central to any successful effort to achieve the goals of the Grant Peace Plan. This convocation combined the few Episcopal clergy in the Indian field with a small number of native laymen to form the deanery. He was unsurprisingly nominated as “Dean”. The gathering added the recommendation that he also become the first Niobrara bishop. The convocation’s resolutions with demands demonstrating that the Sioux in attendance had already moved down the road toward assimilation in response to the work of Samuel Hinman. These concerns included a resolution that Christian wives submit to their husbands.<sup>296</sup> All items on this list were likely calculated to

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294 Grant K Anderson, “Samuel D. Hinman and the Opening of the Black Hills,” *Nebraska History* 60 (1979): 520-542

295 Trask, “Episcopal Missions on the Santee and Yankton Reservations” addresses the relation between the Peace Policy and the Episcopal Church.

296 “Journal, Constitution and By-Laws of the Convocation of the Niobrara Held October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 1870. Mission Press, Yankton Agency Dakota Territory, 1870. The marriage reference is on 7-8. Copy located at the Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas, Domestic Missions, Publications D-M, Indians, General.

gain supporter approval as they called for wider adoption of behaviors which eastern whites believed should be adopted by Native Americans as proof of their current state of “civilization”. In its entirety the document laid the foundation for Rev. Hinman’s claim that he was effectively advancing President Grant’s goals.

Rev. Hinman ultimately did not grasp the brass ring of Bishop of the Niobrara. The national church selected William Hobart Hare, the secretary of its foreign missions board who had earlier turned down a chance to be an overseas bishop, for the position. In a further setback Hare was nominated by Hinman’s when mentor, Bishop Benjamin Whipple of Minnesota, whose credibility on Indian issues was grounded on his work in Minnesota and his petition to President Lincoln calling for the pardon of the 303 Indians slated to be executed for their roles, real or presumed, in the Minnesota War. Lincoln pardoned all but 39 of the condemned men.

The Hinman-Indian collaboration came apart when the native clergy began to side with the newly arrived bishop. Hinman and Hare begin to clash soon after Hare’s arrival in the spring of 1873 when Hinman sought to supersede the bishop’s judgements with his own. Their relationship was made more problematic by the fact that Hare did not speak Dakota and relied on Hinman to translate all of his conversations with Indians. The core issue between the clerics was how best to carry out mission work with Indians. The nastiness between them ended in the late 1870s with the removal of the troublesome cleric from Indian contact in the face of charges for moral turpitude. The suspended clergyman responded that he had been slandered by the bishop and quickly filed a lawsuit against the bishop.

It quickly became apparent that Hinman's hold on native Christians was tenuous. Indian animosity toward Rev. Hinman was evident in the witness lists at the trial; all of the Indian clergy testified on behalf of the bishop. Twenty-one of Hare's 24 witnesses, whether Indian or white, came from the reservation, while only eight of the plaintiff's 36 supporters were reservation residents. While Hinman's witnesses asserted his moral purity, they did not live on the reservation, the site of Hinman's reported liaison with a sixteen year old girl, Tipi Dutawin. Hinman's collaborative relationship, whether apparent or real, was over.

The trial, held in New York in 1882 gained national notoriety because it involved clergy from an influential national religious denomination; it was reported on daily in the press. While the initial verdict found for the plaintiff, that decision was vacated at the end of a long appeal process after which the higher court required that the clerics turn to arbitration to settle their differences.<sup>297</sup> During the years spent waiting for the appeals court decision, Hinman was barred from the Santee Reservation and was also denied permission to relocate to another Episcopal jurisdiction to resume his ministry.

Events surrounding the trial suggested the emergence of a successful but likely tacit collaboration to remove a mutually objectionable person from the reservation. The white bishop was enabled permanently to dismiss a troublesome clergyman whose activities violated many of the criteria of an exemplary Christian life. In turn the Sioux clergy got rid of divisive and disturbing presence on the reservation whose potential use of his knowledge of individual Dakota pasts conflicted with his claims of friendship. Skeptics might note that native support of

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297 David S. Trask, "The Presbyterian vs. The Bishop: Episcopal Church Administration of President Grant's Peace Policy among the Yankton and Santee People, 1869-1882", in "The Civil War & The Northern Plains: A Sesquicentennial Observance", Kristi Thompson and Harry Thompson, comp., The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 2011. 199-212. Accessed April 13, 2015. [http://www.augie.edu/sites/default/files/2011\\_dakota\\_conference\\_papers.pdf](http://www.augie.edu/sites/default/files/2011_dakota_conference_papers.pdf)

the bishop had potential rewards because a bishop, by virtue of the powers of his office, could promote or depose clergy, select individuals for education at eastern white schools or appoint a person to a more or less desirable mission post on one of the territory's reservations. This satisfactory collaboration became less valuable, however, when Bishop Hare's responsibilities were expanded to include all Episcopal residents of Dakota Territory regardless of race. His time on the reservations diminished as he spent more time in the towns established by early settlers.

A second, more durable opportunity for Indian-white collaboration grew out of the activity of a few young Sioux men who were starting down the path to full clerical status. They organized The Planting Society in 1874; this society was later renamed the Brotherhood of Christian Unity (BCU) and it grew into a more and more influential as the century advanced. White clergy initially regarded it as a traditional guild of Episcopal men working to advance the work of the church and did not accord it much status. The group's founders saw their organization differently. They modeled their effort on the Big Bellies, an organization begun by Sitting Bull to help the poor. White clergy could see the name change from Planting Society as proof of the success of their Christianization effort. But the reality of the situation was more complex.

One of the BCU founders, Philip Deloria (the great grandfather of the historian cited for emphasizing the importance of the watershed year 1831 in Indian policy), had been elected chief of Band 8 (the Half-Breed Band) in their belief that his knowledge of white society would benefit the band. It did not hurt that Philip's father had also been the leader of the band. The shift of the organization's name was not made in response to a growing Christian faith although

that may have been occurring among the men. The selection of an overtly religious theme was done in the hope of restoring unity within Indian communities that were fragmenting along denominational lines because of pressure from missionaries to stay true to the missionary's denomination. To attend another denomination was akin to apostasy. The expectation of exclusive church membership did not make sense to a lot of Native Americans. 298

BCU members collaborated with the organized Episcopal Church and the nation's Indian agents in an ongoing relationship in the hope that the Sioux could at least deflect some of the harsher demands of national Indian policy. Unsurprisingly the management style of most agents was not truly collaborative. Agents got their orders from Washington along with the task of "selling" those decisions rather than working toward a mutually acceptable compromise. The white community valued policy compliance over local knowledge about how a national "solution" would impact daily reservation life. A cluster of interactions in the mid-1880s reveals the dynamics and outcomes of collaboration at a time when national policy was becoming more insistent on the need to reach closure on the assimilation project. This occurred at a time when Native Americans were better equipped to try to maneuver around government demands.

A cluster of conflicts in 1884-85 involving the Sioux, the federal government and the Episcopal Church reveals the possibilities and limitations affecting the opportunities available to the BCU who primarily collaborated with the local Episcopal leadership, especially on the Yankton Reservation. The first action of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity was to support clergyman Joseph Cook, the head of the Yankton reservation mission, when an Indian who had

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298 Vine Deloria, jr., *Singing for a Spirit A Portrait of the Dakota Sioux* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 49, 54.

been fired from his agency job blamed the white minister for his downfall. Speaking to any who would listen, Alfred Smith made a series of charges in the hopes that Rev. Cook would be dismissed from the reservation. He asked BCU members to help him in his efforts. He was not aware that Philip Deloria had already briefed Cook on the situation. BCU leaders met with Smith, let him rant awhile, and, after he ran out of steam, after which he found he had no support for his cause. Smith then asked to be invited to join the Brotherhood.<sup>299</sup>

A month later two traditional chiefs, Old Strike and Feather-in-the-Ear, attacked the BCU by trying to reduce the number of Yankton bands from eight to six. Their targets were Band 8 led by Philip Deloria as well as the Choteau Creek Band. By eliminating these two bands, the traditional chiefs would undercut the support for much of the progressive leadership among the Yanktons. When the agent refused that request, Feather-in-the-Ear lambasted Cook for allowing a mission employee to cut hay on Indian land and for setting up a farm for the benefit of the mission's school.<sup>300</sup>

This was not a fully reciprocal collaboration. With Hare dealing with expanded responsibilities, Joseph Cook held more of the power to recommend individuals for jobs and schools as well as give or withhold approval for church marriages. His policy positions were generally in line with the agent's even if they ran opposed to the wishes of the Brotherhood. In early discussions of the allotment of reservation land to whites and Indians, Philip Deloria and another BCU member, Swan, offered two prerequisites to the sale of this land to whites. First he wanted the agent to abolish the role of chieftainship. This was a strong incentive as the agent regarded the chiefs as the bastion of traditional support. This offer would have required

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<sup>299</sup> Joseph Cook Journals, July 31, August 25, 26, 1884.

<sup>300</sup> Joseph Cook Journals, September 10, 1884

Philip to give up his own chieftainship. Second he wanted tribal members to select their lands first and to be issued their certificate of ownership. This would give the Yanktons advance knowledge of how much land they had left while also letting them have first choice of the best land. Cook took the proposal to the agent who feared a fight if the proposal was adopted. Cook agreed and told the BCU to meet the issue of land policy “fairly” and “on its merits”. This decision gave outside settler’s first choice of the land.<sup>301</sup> On September 25<sup>th</sup> a government Indian commission came to the Yankton reservation to discuss the land offer. Cook revealed his prejudices when he said he “feared” the Indians and not the progressives “will prevail and say ‘no’”. Cook underlined “Indians” in his journal. The man was an assimilationist first and foremost.<sup>302</sup>

Finally, in the spring of 1885 the Agent announced the transition from band chieftains a Board of Advisors with sixteen members, two from each band. This would seem to mark the success for the BCU leadership in the long run. Philip reportedly stayed in the background to avoid being associated with the unpopular decision; the fact that he lost his own chieftainship would deflect attention from his own efforts to promote this outcome.<sup>303</sup> Later Philip Deloria and Felix Bunot, two members of the Brotherhood, recently appointed judges for tribal disputes, reportedly received death threats. As progressives they had successfully negotiated tribal politics with the aid of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity.<sup>304</sup>

The collaboration practiced along the Missouri River was not the storied pioneer cooperation of barn raisings or wheat threshing. It was the product of the interactions among

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301 Joseph Cook Journals, September 10, 22, 1884.

302 Joseph Cook Journals, September 25, 1884.

303 Joseph Cook Journals, March 17, 1885

304 Joseph Cook Journals, June 17, 1885.

diverse populations with different needs or conflicting goals who worked with one another out of necessity. The reservation agent, the missionary, the trader, the “traditional” Indian and the BCU “progressive”<sup>305</sup> all had to work within the confines of the geography they shared. Each measured success by different standards; often they interacted in what were “zero sum” games. Some fared better than others. The agent needed to produce peace and steps toward education and assimilation (or personal wealth by skimming their retirement funds from the annuity stream that flowed into the reservation). Missionaries needed conversions that pointed to the success of their missions which ensured the continuation of donor contributions from eastern churches and societies. Traditional native leaders sought to continue familiar though truncated lifeways although agents often saw these folks as simply seeking to live on the “dole” of government support. “Progressive” Indians, the members of the BCU, enjoyed success in the attainment of positions in the emerging reservation hierarchy of clergy, Indian police and judges and practicing farmers and ranchers. These are the successes that accompany the settling of communities by disparate groups of people rather than the imagined harmony of an area settled by a single homogeneous group.

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<sup>305</sup> There term “progressive” will require more explanation in extended versions of this paper. While the missionaries of the 1870s many folks in subsequent years have used the term, historians have fleshed out this term in recent years. The use of the term here simply reflects the usage of the 1870s.

## The West Begins: A Man and His Missions

Blair Tremere

This paper offers a response to the conference theme and corollary questions, e.g., where is The West and, what constitutes The West?, that have perplexed those explorers and settlers, mainly non-Indian, who strived to extend and enhance civilization across the United States and, particularly, through Dakota Territory. Answers depend upon an understanding of context, i.e., is it where the West began for people who recorded their experiences which serve as historical resources; or, is it where the West begins for people whose experiences are more nostalgic than historic; or, is it where indigenous Indians and their heirs found themselves as they migrated in response to forces of Western Civilization? We will address the latter.

### Begin at the Beginning

Dawn was breaking on May 9, 1874 as the Concord stage coach pulled out of Yankton, Dakota Territory. It reached its destination, the Yankton Indian Agency sixty miles away by early evening, delivering two passengers who had just met. One, Miss Amelia Ives [1], was a worker in the Yankton Mission [2]. Her fellow passenger was a twenty year old Englishman who, two years earlier, “had offered” himself as a “missionary” in response to an appeal from the Church of England.

Edward Ashley’s parents had left him alone to complete his public education and an indentured apprenticeship as a carpenter, when they migrated to the United States. He was a devout member of his Church of England parish congregation, St. John the Baptist, and was employed as a master workman when his parents persuaded him with letters and tickets to join them in Muskegon, Michigan in the “New World.” He arrived in New York City on September 1, 1873.

Letters of introduction, "to any American clergyman," from his Vicar, William Bennett in Frome, Silwood, Somersetshire, England were handed to a Muskegon Rector, Rev. A. W. Snyder, who learned of Ashley's interest in the church and his acceptance into membership of the Missionary Society of Diocese of Bath and Wells two years earlier. The Rev. Snyder conveyed Ashley's aspiration for service to the Bishop of Michigan, the Rt. Rev. McClosky, who, Ashley recalls, reported through Snyder that, "while he had no opening for me, he knew of a new Missionary Bishop who was appealing for helpers."

"It was out West, among Indians," Ashley wrote of Bishop McCloskey's reply, "but perhaps I would like to not go among savages. However, Mr. Snyder could talk to me about it, and if I favored it, he could write the (new) Bishop about me. I told him my desire was to go anywhere I might be needed."

The new Episcopal missionary bishop was Bishop W. Hobart Hare who began corresponding with Ashley and soon he "sent me instructions to go out to Dakota Territory to a place called Yankton Indian Agency. I was anxious to go, but my parents were very much opposed to it...they had other plans for me; as part of the plan, I was to build a house for them. During the early part of the winter, I had started the building, and when I received my word to go to Dakota, it was not yet finished and I requested permission of the Bishop to delay going till the work was done which he kindly granted. By the end of April, the house was finished, and having persuaded my parents that it was for the best, I started out like Abraham of Old, not knowing whither I went."

Ashley wrote, "I suppose I was a tenderfoot, and when I reached Yankton, the then jumping off place for the Dakota Southern Railroad, the evening of May 7th, and found the

stage had gone out that morning, and I would have to wait till Saturday morning; I really felt myself to be a stranger in a strange land.” He had crossed the Atlantic alone from England, disembarked in New York City where he met some acquaintances from Canada (where his father had earlier served in the British military), and made the trip by rail alone to his parents’ home in Michigan. But the unplanned layover in Yankton presented him with an awakening---first, among many---about life, where the West began.

He described the layover venue: “I stopped at the frame hotel, St. Charles, afterwards renovated and called the Portland and (later) The Hotel Yankton. Across the street eastward, were some frame buildings used as offices in one of which upstairs a murder had recently been committed. Two friends had got into a political argument, and in anger, one shot the other.” The journey by stagecoach to the Yankton Indian Agency was revealing to the uninitiated missionary who, “as I passed through the villages of Bon Homme and Springfield (where the other passenger, Miss Ives, had boarded), and into the Indian country...realized how different it was from my native land.” It seemed to him that, “outside of Sioux Falls and Yankton, there were no towns or villages, except along the Missouri River. I remembered that in my school days, my geography book spoke of it as part of the Great American Desert. Then, I little realized that I should ever see it or become part of it, and help civilize the then untamed Indians, and watch the growth of two empire States later to be made out of Dakota Territory.”

At Yankton Agency he observed that, “the Indians, with painted faces and feathers in scalp locks, had finished a game of shinny, [3] some were walking and some were riding horseback with guns and shinny sticks across the pommel of their saddles, and I wondered if it

would be possible to change such people, turn the savage into a Christian, and was it possible I had come to assist in an impossible job?"

"However," he wrote, "I soon realized that others had seen the vision and started movement toward this realization. Bishop Hare realized a responsibility, and he saw the vision, but there were so few missionaries, how could he bring it to realization?"

Bishop Hare was not at home when Ashley arrived at Yankton Agency, "being away on visitation; and when he returned, I found a friend whose friendship lasted till his death." [4]

One of the leading missionaries in America, Hare gained the title, "the Apostle of the West" and, alternately, "Apostle of the Indians," for his work in the rural Dakotas among pioneers and Native Americans. [5] He mentored his new assistant as both one who had served the church, "back East," in New Jersey, as a deacon, ordained in 1859 and a priest, ordained in 1862, and also as a contemporary missionary who "departed for the Indian Country" on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1873 having been just elected and consecrated Missionary Bishop of Niobrara (in 1871)."

Ashley had imagined, on his trips from England and from Muskegon, that he would have "surprises," which in the West meant challenges. "The headquarters of the (Yankton) Mission was St. Paul's School, and the next day was Sunday, and we went to church in the old cedar log chapel, which was the pre-Cathedral of the Missionary District of Niobrara [6]. The service was conducted by the Rev. J.W. Cook assisted by Rev. L.C. Walker, the Deacon...in a tongue unknown to me, and I was confronted by another problem: could I ever learn it? Could I not get along without learning it? I soon realized that to be able to reach the Indian I must do it in his own language, and I knew my difficulties." He met the challenge, having had only formal foreign language instruction in the rudiments of Latin and Greek.

O.W. Coursey in one of a series of pamphlets, "Who's Who in South Dakota," states in the 1920 issue on Ashley's life, that he "became wonderfully proficient in speaking and in writing their language. He edited an Indian church paper---Anpaokin [meaning 'Daybreak'], and translated into the Sioux tongue many educational books, with helps for studying the Bible. [7] Dr. Ashley might well be termed the William Penn of the West, for he never had any trouble with the Indians. They always respected him, did as he asked them to, and never raised a hand to harm him." Coursey writes that Ashley "explains his phenomenal success among them on the theory that he early learned to converse with them in their own language instead of by signs, and the fact that in all of his dealings with them he always applied the Golden Rule." [8]

The year of Bishop Hare's ordination, 1862, was also marked with the infamous "Great Sioux Uprising in Minnesota" which the Episcopal South Dakota Diocese cites as the beginning of the church's Indian ministry. "After years of government treachery and deceit, the Santee people rose up and broke free of the Minnesota Valley reservation. Many lives were lost, and despite the fact that Christians among the Santee saved the lives of missionaries and some settlers, all of the surviving Indians were imprisoned and later expelled to the Dakota Territory," according Diocese history. The church did not establish a formal jurisdiction in the new area to the west until 1871 "due to the chaos of the U.S. Civil War." [9]

### The Dynamic West, New Beginnings

Edward Ashley was born in 1853. It is unclear whether, during his schooling in England, he learned about the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, about subsequent treaties made between Indians and the U.S. Government, or about legislation including the Indian Removal Act of 1830,

and the Homestead Act of 1862. He definitely gained a heightened awareness of their significance as he pursued his chosen mission. The policies and strategies that evolved from the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory, not only impacted the plight of Indians in the eastern and southern U.S., but also reverberated for decades through the growing country, including Minnesota and Dakota Territories where the West began.

Arthur DeRosier in his essay, "The Choctaw Indians: Negotiations for Survival," describes the environment surrounding the Treaty of Doak's Stand and, observes that, "More ominous for the Choctaws and all other eastern tribal groups, was a policy expounded by (President Thomas) Jefferson but never inaugurated during his administration---the removal of all Indians to new homes west of the Mississippi River. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, Jefferson believed that all eastern Indians should be transplanted onto these lands, leaving the East for white expansion. Though his preachments on this subject were never translated into action, it remains his most significant 'contribution' to Indian affairs; in fact, this possibility was so attractive to white Easterners that in short order it became a national blue print for the future, a future that was not far away."

DeRosier continues: "In Indian matters, (Secretary of War John C.) Calhoun showed his mettle and his competence. He agreed with Jefferson that Indians had to be concentrated on individual holding, educated, and removed west of the Mississippi to save them from extinction in the East. But unlike many of his contemporaries, especially (U.S. Commissioner and negotiator) Andrew Jackson, he would not force a single Indian to move to a new home, if he (the Indian) preferred taking his chances in the East.

“For most Americans, including both Jefferson and Jackson, philosophical and humanitarian reasons for removal were unnecessary and hypocritical. They wanted the land, and they would use factories, duress, and wars to acquire it. The goal was worth the risks involved. But Calhoun would not accept this position; his sense of fairness would not allow him to do so. He wanted Indian removal or another reason---to save the tribesmen from extinction.

“Calhoun was a pragmatist and a realist. He knew that it was utterly impossible to stop the westward expansion of America. Settlers wanted new lands and they would acquire them one way or another.”

“With no other recourse available to them, the Choctaws signed the Treaty of Doak’s Stand on October 18, 1820. They escaped losing all their land....Andrew Jackson’s object was to acquire eastern land, and he cared not what he had to grant Indians to get it. At first glance, it would seem that the Choctaws were well treated, for who wouldn’t trade five million acres for thirteen million in return? That argument is only viable; however, if one assumes that the Indians would be allowed to keep the thirteen million acres received. No such assumption can be made. As far back as 1803, (President) Jefferson stated that the government would remove Indians to the west of the Mississippi and allow them to stay there until white population caught up with them. They would be removed again and again as the white population advanced.

“‘When we shall be full on this side,’ Jefferson wrote, ‘we may lay off a range of States on the western bank [of the Mississippi River] from the head to the mouth, and so, range after range, advancing compactly as we multiply.’ If one accepts the inevitability of continual removal to the west as whites inexorably advance, what difference does it make how much

land the government grants Indians or whose country it is located in? The only object is to get the eastern land now; the western land will take care of itself at a later date.” [10]

The West, thus politically deemed to be a depository for Indians, had shifted and now began at the Mississippi River. However, in Minnesota, much settlement activity was well underway along and west of the river before 1862, extending the demarcation for Indians generally to the Minnesota River and the Dakota boundary, when the Uprising-Massacre-War flared. C.M. Oehler in The Great Sioux Uprising, contends the confrontation effectively began three hundred years earlier, “when the first Europeans poked exploratory canoes into North America’s inland waters, exclaiming over the beauty, fertility, and emptiness of the land. The trickle of migration in the wake of the canoes had become a tidal wave. It had engulfed tribe after tribe in the eastern part of the land, extinguishing some and causing others to fall westward. Now it was washing the eastern edge of the Great Plains, whose possessors and guardians were the Sioux, Cheyennes, Pawnees, and others.”

Oehler recounts that in the post-war period in the Minnesota, “Occupants of the Fort Snelling winter camp were moved in the spring to a tract of barren, unproductive land on Crow Creek, Dakota Territory. ‘The very memory of Crow Creek became horrible,” wrote a missionary (Rev. Stephen R. Riggs) who accompanied them. ‘They still hush their voices at mention of the name.’ Three years later they were allowed to move to more arable land in the valleys of the Big Sioux (River) and Niobrara (River).”[11]

A historical account by Ashley of the events that occurred twelve years before his arrival in the West provides added detail and perspective. “Sioux in Minnesota were to cede all land in west Wisconsin and Eastern Minnesota, and as a result the agencies were set up along the

Minnesota River, one the Upper Agency and one the Lower Agency. It was the Indians of the Lower Agency who were the instigators of the Massacre. "As I remember it, the Indians of the Upper Agency were promised that one million, three hundred and sixty thousand dollars was (sic) to be placed at interest, and that five per cent was to be paid to the Indians annually. My impression is that a like amount was assigned the Indians of the Lower Agency.

"These payments were promised to be paid in gold, but Uncle Sam at that time had troubles of his own. The war between the north and south was on, and gold was at (a) premium. It seems the government had sent out paper money to pay the Indians. They, not knowing what paper money was, declined to accept it. The Indians, meeting and deciding not to accept the paper money, demanded rations to keep from starving, which supplies were in the government hands, but the government would not issue rations."

Thus, Ashley recalls, "it was about this time that the Indians decided to go on the war path because they were refused necessary assistance. The Indians of the Lower Agency went on the war path which resulted in the Massacre. This so enraged the people that they demanded that all the Sioux be made to leave Minnesota. Whereupon, the government passed a 'Confiscation Act of Rights of the Sioux Indian in Minnesota' (reference is to The Indian Removal Act, signed by President Lincoln in 1863, "*An Act for the Removal of the Sisseton, Wahpaton, Medawakanton and Wahpakoota Bands of Sioux or Dakato (sic) Indians, and for the disposition of their Lands in Minnesota and Dakotas*)." )"

## The West, Where the Indians Are

Minnesota state legislation in 1863 also contributed to a regional definition of where the West began by specifying “that the Indians were to be removed to unoccupied land, ‘well adapted for agricultural purposes,’ beyond the limits of any state.” [12] A more refined and durable geographic definition of where the West began was established with the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie when the “Great Sioux Reservation” was created. That is the legacy of “East River vs. West River” labels, though the Missouri River had already been accepted as the eastern boundary of most of the Indian Reservations which now numbered five. The total area was expansive and was a template for some caught up in the settlement who needed to define their space.

Bishop Hare explained the “Bounds of Jurisdiction” of the Episcopalian Missionary District in his first Annual Report as Missionary Bishop of Niobrara in 1874. “(My) jurisdiction proper...is a tract of country bounded on the East by the Missouri River; on the South by the State of Nebraska; on the West by the 104<sup>th</sup> Meridian, the Territory of Wyoming and Nebraska; on the North by the 46<sup>th</sup> degree of north latitude; including also the several Indian reservations on the left bank of the Missouri, North and East of said river.”

“In order, however, to give unity and compactness to the effort of the Church for the Indian tribes,” he continued, “the House of Bishops passed the following resolution: ‘Resolved, That the Missionary Bishop of Niobrara be authorized to take charge of such work among the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains, as may be transferred to his oversight by the Bishops within whose Jurisdiction such work may lie.’

“It has,” he noted, “seemed advisable in several cases that Bishops should take the action suggested by the Resolution, and accordingly the Mission among the Oneidas in Wisconsin has been transferred to my Episcopal oversight by the Bishop of Wisconsin, and like action has been taken by the Bishop of Nebraska with reference to the Mission among the Santees within his jurisdiction.”

Bishop Hare reported that “the main body of the Missionary enterprise of our Church among the Indians is located among the tribes on the upper Missouri. The whole number of main stations on the River is six. There are besides, two substations connected with the Santee Mission and three with the Yankton Mission.

“Our Missions are strung along the river. They can there do their work more advantageously, for the reason that the Government Agencies are located on the river front. These agencies are points of occasional resort by all Indians, because the benefactions of the Government are dispensed there. There are also the residence of the better-disposed Indians, because they have there both protection and encouragement in learning the white man’s ways. Thus, Missions placed at these points not only benefit the people who are settled there, but attract the attention of the wilder roving bands, who examine them with an amusing curiosity (sometimes with undisguised disgust), and in their wanderings interior-ward, gossip over them at their camp fires with all they meet.” [13]

Ashley, the master-carpenter-turned-missionary built churches, stations, schools, and dwellings as he developed Indian missions. He then provided the oversight of the occupation and operation of the missions as part of his vision. He wrote in 1909 that, when Hobart Hare, “late Bishop of South Dakota, began his work among the Sioux,” there were “then only five

congregations...in the whole country. Then only five Missionaries, no native Clergy or Helpers of any kind, yet after all his years of labor he left sixteen native Clergy—five of them Presbyters (deacons or priests)—ministering to congregations, a large number of lay workers, and over ninety stations or preaching places.” [14]

O.W. Coursey noted in 1920 that, “Of the twenty-nine native ministers ordained in the Episcopal Church, he (Ashley) has had much to do with their instruction, examination, and ordination.”

### The Golden West and Strawberries

Ashley pursued another mission in 1876, which he termed “seeing that the Indians got a square deal.” He wrote that Gen. George Custer “in company with geologists from the east and a band of Santee scouts and soldiers had gone through the Black Hills exploring for gold, which having been found, the whites from everywhere poured in for the new El Dorado, and while troops were used to keep back the adventurers, the government under pressure found it necessary to make a treaty with the Sioux for the cession of the Black Hills to the United States and (President Grant) sent out a commission to treat with the Indians for the same.

(Minnesota Episcopal) Bishop Whipple, ex-(Dakota Territorial) Governor Newton Edmunds, and others formed the commission. From the start, the commission seemed to be divided as to the manner in which they were to bring about the cession. One party believed its duty was to obtain the consent of the Indians by an honest explanation of the treaty which they presented; the other party contended that their duty was to get the treaty through, by hook or crook.”

His colleague, Rev. H. Burt, also fluent in the Sioux dialect, “obtained the consent of the commission that he and I should be present in the councils.” They attended the meetings “from the beginning to the end, for the purpose of seeing that an honest interpretation of the treaty was made to the Indians, and the names of Burt and myself are on the records as interpreters. Burt is dead and, so far as I know, I am the only living white man party to the Black Hills Treaty.” He affirms the long-standing contention of the Sioux Nation that “the so-called Black Hills Treaty was obtained by fraud and in violation of previous treaty stipulations. Indeed, Custer himself in entering the Black Hills violated a solemn agreement between the U.S. Government and the Sioux Indians which later cost him his life.”

At the request of the Aberdeen, SD Daily News in 1918, Ashley prepared a detailed account about “the Indian struggle for more remuneration for the Black Hills, and summarizes the entire Black Hills situation from the first treaty up to the present time.” It includes the text of an address he presented to an Indian council at Crow Creek in 1918, where he stated, “Friends, since the year 1876...I have continued my work among you people, and my ears have been filled with some truths, and also with many things not true. My ears have been filled with things that are right, mixed with much that was wrong. He continued, “That during these years there has been ringing in my ears, Black Hills, Black Hills, Black Hills.”

He said he addressed the Council, “with the deepest possible respect, and in all humility. I may not understand some things, but this I understand, that the Indian office is an office created for the purpose of assisting you people, not only the Dakotas, but all the Indians within the United States. You have had your councils year after year. Your proceedings have been sent to Washington, and the only response has been, ‘You Indians have no valid claim.’ For

myself, I want to say that if ever there was a body of people who had a valid claim, you people have it in this Black Hills question.”[15]

Reflecting on his years with Bishop Hare, Ashley cited four attributes that “have been used for many years among the Sioux: (1) The Missionary has patiently labored year in and year out, some for over thirty-six years; (2) They have had a true sympathy for the people among whom they worked, recognizing their badness as well as goodness, and working on the good that is in them aim to lift them to higher levels; (3) And, as to leadership, none will deny that title and position to him, who won the love and respect of the Indian, and their reverence of all as the Apostle to the Sioux Indians; and (4) His policy as those of his workers, was to help the Indian to take his place as a Christian and a citizen of the land.” [Emphasis added]

He contended that the four attributes “have been sadly lacking on the part of Officials. The Government may in theory have a settled policy, but from a lack of leadership, sympathy, and patience, the advance in Indian civilization has not been as much as it ought. “When feared, our leaders treated with him (Indian leader) as an equal...but as soon as convenient, the treaty was violated, and then when attempts were made to insist on rights solemnly guaranteed, gun and bayonet were used to uphold the wrong, to be followed by other treaties to be again broken when convenient, and with the lapse of time, battles are called massacres and massacres battles, and today the Indian is a ward of the Government, and so far as we can judge, to remain such, until he is civilized or exterminated!”[16]

As to our premise that an Indian presence is a characteristic of The West, consider Ashley’s thought on a topic that irked him (and, with different motives, government agents) throughout his tenure. “The whites get their idea of the present day Indian,” he wrote, “as they

see him in some Wild West Show, or dancing in some gown at an old settlers picnic, for the amusement of the crowds from the country around to drop their dollars in the towns, sometimes to illustrate the killing of (General George) Custer at some town, so as to draw a larger crowd to that town instead of some others, and this, as stated by some in my hearing, is civilization.”

Another perspective, from the pen of a ranking government official is telling. J.H. McGregor, Superintendent of the Rosebud Reservation in a 1921 letter to a South Dakota farmer who had inquired about obtaining “high priced tents” for Indians (who were asking the farmer and the agents for them). “Now, as I view the situation, a tent is rather an inducement for traveling around and sometimes the Indians will have to get over the roaming habit...” He explained that, “the Sioux Indians are living among white people and are riding in cars like white people; wearing clothes like white people; eating strawberries and canned fruits like white people; going to church like white people; dancing like white people and it occurs to me that the time is near at hand when they shall discontinue being an Indian and white man at the same time. Very few white people have tents and if white people don’t need tents, why do Indians?” [17]

Ashley reported his experiences at the Pine Ridge and Sisseton Reservations, in a letter of July 18, 1884 to the national Episcopal Church offices. He said, “The change in the condition of the Indians from what they were ten years ago was such I could not help thinking, ‘What hath God wrought.’ We are not only encouraged but strengthened, for our Indian (Niobrara Convocation) delegates spoke ‘strong words,’ showing how much they prize the blessings the Church has brought them.”

His letter, part of a required report from the missionary field in his tenth year, concludes, "I am sorry to tell you that I have lost another of my ponies, the second of the original team I had. I fear this will hinder me in my work, and it is a severe loss to me, for how I am to replace him, I know not." [18]

Ashley, however, knew where he was: where the West begins.

EAST AND WEST [19]

"Men look to the East for the dawn-  
ing things,  
For the light of the rising sun;  
But they look to the West, to the crimson West,  
For a view of the things that are  
done.

"For the Eastward sun is a newborn  
hope

From the dark of the night dis-  
tilled,  
But the Westward sun is the sunset  
sun,

The sun of a hope fulfilled.

"For there in the East we dreamed  
the dream

Of the things we hoped to do,  
But here in the West, the crimson  
West,

The dreams of the East come  
true.

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## End Notes

- [1] Ashley mentions a “Miss Ives” in his draft autobiography. A 1928 internal publication from All Saints School, the Episcopal School for Girls in Sioux Falls, “Bishop Hare and All Saints School, A History” by Mary B. Peabody contains the following, under the heading, “Some of those who helped: There is a noble call, too, of women who shared in the work by giving many of the years of their lives as teachers and evangelists among the Dakota Indians...” Miss Amelia Ives is listed.
- [2] The terms, “mission,” and “agency” are often used interchangeably. Agencies typically were established by the Government and often shared a name with a mission headquarters established by the church. Also, the terms, “station,” and “parish” were used among church officials to identify venues of religious services and counseling; these facilities were subordinate to missions but often had unique names. The Episcopal Church used terms such as “deanery” and “field” to describe jurisdictions which did not necessarily align with political subdivisions, including the common “reservation” and “territory.”
- [3] Shiny is a children’s game played with a curved stick and a block of wood or a leather ball. It is cited as an early form of hockey, and the term also refers to the curved stick.
- [4] William Hobart Hare was born May 17, 1838 in New Jersey and he died October 23, 1909 in New Jersey. His body was shipped to Sioux Falls and was buried in a grave marked with a large Sioux granite monument in the shape of a cross on the east side of Calvary Cathedral in Sioux Falls. As the church building was expanded, the body and the monument were relocated several blocks south to the grounds of All Saints School. This was reversed later and the gravesite, with the monument are now located on the north side of the Cathedral.
- [5] These honorary names are found in various newspaper and historical publication accounts. See, “Life and Labors of Bishop Hare, Apostle to the Sioux,” by Mark Antony DeWolf Howe, Sturgis and Walton Company (1911).
- [6] Bishop Hare explained in his Annual Address of 1884, five years before South Dakota became a state that the district was changed in 1883 to include all of what is now South Dakota, and, thus his new title was Missionary Bishop of South Dakota. He said, “As the Territory in which I am placed is Dakota, and as our twenty-two congregations of Indians are all ‘Dakotas,’ it is eminently proper that the name ‘Dakota’ should appear in my title...” He also explained, “There are many reasons, however (e.g. difference of language,) why the work among the Indians should in a measure be grouped by itself, and I propose, therefore, to divide the whole Missionary District of South Dakota into two Deaneries to be known respectively as the ‘Western, or Niobrara, Deanery of South Dakota’ and the ‘Eastern Deanery of South Dakota.’ The Western or Niobrara will include all the Indian Reservations within the Jurisdiction of South Dakota and all Indian Missions wherever situated. The Eastern Deanery will include all the rest of the

- Missionary District of South Dakota." He further explained there would be a Dean to be known as "Rural Dean" named to each of these and, "though not invested with any authority, they may exercise within the bounds of their respective Deaneries general *administration* (sic) and superintendence for the promotion of Clerical fellowship and the prosecution of the Missionary work in unoccupied fields provided the same does not conflict with the rights of the Bishop, the other Clergy, or the Parishes." Edward Ashley later added Rural Dean of the Niobrara Deanery to his missionary duties.
- [7] Ashley spent much time coordinating the publication of materials ranging from the prayer books and hymnals as well as texts used in catechism classes; he also raised funds from external sources and was known to pay for items himself. He also was appointed by Bishop Hugh Burleson to head a committee charged with developing the "English and Dakota Service Book from the Book of Common Prayer" which was published in 1918.
- [8] O.W. Coursey, "Reverend Edward Ashley, Missionary to the Indians," in "Who's Who in South Dakota," Volume III, Educator Supply Company, Mitchell, South Dakota (1920)
- [9] Diocese of the Episcopal Church of South Dakota. See website:  
<https://www.diocesesd.org/diocese/a-brief-history-of-the-diocese/>
- [10] Arthur DeRosier, Jr., "The Choctaw Indians, Negotiations for Survival," an essay, "Forked Tongues and Broken Treaties," edited by Donald E. Worcester, The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho (1975), pp. 1-32.
- [11] C.M. Oehler, "The Great Sioux Uprising," Oxford University Press, New York (1959), pp. 237—242.
- [12] W.E. Lass, "The Removal from Minnesota of the Sioux and Winnebago Indians," 38 Minn History 354 (1963). Prof. Lass provides in this article (pp. 353-364) an excellent account of the removal and dispersal of Indians from Minnesota.
- [13] Bishops were required to submit an Annual Report to the national office of the Church in New York. Hare's first report for 1873-1874 is in the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society Archives of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. Ashley's papers includes a copy of this report.
- [14] Ashley's accounting occasionally varied from official Church records; reports from individual missions and other units were delayed and subject to correction. Ashley's reference to "country" is to Dakota Territory and the geographic areas earlier referenced by Hare.
- [15] "Indian Claim To Black Hills," Aberdeen, South Dakota "Daily News," May 27, 1918.

- [16] Ashley's increasing criticism of the U.S. Government was based upon the performance and lack thereof by local agents and their superiors. The reference to the four attributes was drawn by Ashley from an article he had read in a publication, "Outlook," wherein a traveler from Africa had rhetorically asked, "can Africa be civilized?" The unidentified traveler answered that, "in his opinion, four things were necessary for that work, viz., Patience, Sympathy, Good Leadership, and Settled Policy."
- [17] Letter from J.H. McGregor, Superintendent, Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota, to Mr. Michael V. Wolf, Cherry Creek, South Dakota, May 31, 1921 with typed heading, "Cheyenne Agency, S.D." From Ashley's papers.
- [18] Letter from Rev. Edward Ashley, Sisseton Agency, July 18, 1884 to "Spirit of Missions," September, 1884 issue. Clergy were expected to file reports with the national church offices and many were published in this official publication. Issues are in the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church archives.
- [19] Coursey, op.cit. This poem is the front-piece of the Edward Ashley issue.

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©1959

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Author’s Note: I drew upon several resources mainly found in the Archives of the Episcopal Church in South Dakota at the Center for Western studies. The Archives include the papers of Rev. Ashley who lived and worked as an Episcopalian missionary in Dakota Territory and the State of South Dakota from 1874 until his death in 1931. He left a substantial record of his work as a deacon and priest serving at numerous Indian missions, as well as his executive duties in his later years as the Archdeacon responsible for the Indian Field of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota. His personal and official correspondence and files, as well as drafts of an autobiography which has been only partially published in articles—most posthumously—serve as credible guides for understanding events of the period.

## **Bakken Crime: Perception vs. Reality**

By Kali Walsh, Brandon Rudnick & Troy Huber

For the past five years western North Dakota has been the focus of national wide media attention as a purported “wild west” featuring a drastic increase in criminal activity. Reports of terrorized local residents and organized crime dominate local media discourse. This paper compiles and compares regional crime perceptions (via media report analysis, survey data, and interviews) with criminal statistics (via state, county, and municipal criminal databases) in the Bakken. This paper considers the Bakken oil boom region to consist of the western North Dakota counties that have witnessed the greatest increase in population due to oil production (Williams, Mountrail, McKenzie, Dunn, Stark, and Ward). Statistics from 2000 to 2008 are considered pre-boom with 2009-2014 considered “boom.” The conclusions of the paper are significant for better understanding the impact of the oil boom on both public safety and residential perceptions of place.

North Dakota has been known to have a very slow growing, and sometimes even declining, population. In 1960, North Dakota’s population was 632,446. In 2005, North Dakota’s population was 634,605.<sup>306</sup> In forty-five years, the population had only grown by about two thousand people; compared to other states in the nation, this is not very much. In those forty-five years the numbers fluctuated but never rose above 686,000, which was its ultimate high in

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306 FBI UCS Annual Crime Reports, *North Dakota Population and Number of Crimes, 1960 – 2013, 1997-2014*, accessed March 3, 2015, <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/ndcrimn.htm>.

1984.<sup>307</sup> It also never sank lower than 615,000 in 1969.<sup>308</sup> It is hard to get an accurate count of population in North Dakota as of 2014. First of all, the census was taken in 2010, which put the population of North Dakota at 674,629. Any numbers after that are only estimates. Second, the estimates do not include the large numbers of people who are working in North Dakota, but maintain residency out of state.<sup>309</sup> We would assume this is a large number of people, as many who come to work in the oil field do not declare residency in North Dakota. Thus, there is probably actually a lot more people who have migrated to North Dakota in the past few years than these numbers portray.

As one can see, North Dakota has never been an area that draws people to it. It has and remains to be a dominantly agricultural and rural state. Thus that means that unless one wants to start farming or ranching, there is not a big pull to want to come to North Dakota. North Dakota began to see an increase in population after the oil boom really got started in the western part of the state around 2008. Hundreds of people started to flood into North Dakota in hopes of “getting rich quick” from the many available opportunities in the oil field and also in the neighboring towns. This boom happened at a time when the nation was experiencing a high rate of unemployment. Many people were willing to come to North Dakota in order to start over and make a better living for themselves and their families because they might not have been able to get a job anywhere else. Williams County was ranked as the fastest growing county in the nation and Stark County was ranked as the fourth.<sup>310</sup> From 2008 to 2009, the

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307 *Ibid.*

308 *Ibid.*

309 North Dakota Department of Commerce. *North Dakota Communities, Counties Ranked Among Nation's Fastest Growing*, 2014, accessed March 7, 2015.

<http://www.commerce.nd.gov/news/NorthDakotaCensusEstimatesShowStatewidePopulationGrowth/>.

310 *Ibid.*

population jumped from 641,421 to 646,844.<sup>311</sup> In one year, the population of North Dakota had jumped almost double the population increase that happened in the entire forty-five years between 1960 and 2005 (Only increased by about 2,000 people).

Many residents of North Dakota are arguing that this increase of “outsiders” (people who move in from out of state) is causing the crime to increase dramatically in the state. The media has really picked up on this idea and North Dakota residents are now getting used to hearing every day on the news about crimes being committed. Whereas before, most North Dakotans say that hearing about a major crime on the news was more of a rare thing. In analyzing media sources, one can see the perceived increase in crime. Looking at an assortment of media sources the number of articles discussing crime and the increase in crime is abundant.

For instance FOX News talked about the huge increase in drug crimes in the state of North Dakota using some examples from Williston. “[...] but the bonanza suddenly flourishing here has also brought with it a dark side: a growing trade in meth, heroin, cocaine and marijuana, the shadow of sinister cartels and newfound violence. [...] What they uncovered was a large-scale methamphetamine ring that had found a home in a state long known for its small-town solitude; [...] the members of this violent gang were all relative newcomers to Williston. They called themselves “The Family,” [...] they had plenty of firepower, too: One of the men had an arsenal of 22 weapons. Drugs and dealers are popping up in all kinds of places: Heroin is being trafficked on isolated Indian reservations. Mexican cartels are slowly making inroads in

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311 FBI UCS Annual Crime Reports. *North Dakota Population and Number of Crimes, 1960 – 2013, 1997-2014*, accessed March 3, 2015. <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/ndcrimn.htm>.

small-town America. And hard-core criminals are bringing drugs in from other states, sometimes concealing them in ingenious ways: liquid meth in windshield wiper reservoirs.”<sup>312</sup>

CNN reported a number of crimes in North Dakota as well. “A Watford City pharmacy was robbed of \$16,000 in narcotics, four people were stabbed at a local strip club in Williston, a semi truck crashed into an RV full of people sleeping and the first prostitution ring in decades was busted. Josslyn Finck, the manager of Barrett's pharmacy in nearby Watford City, said [...] before this year, small incidents of shoplifting -- like someone pocketing a Chap Stick -- were the only crimes she had encountered.”<sup>313</sup>

“Assault and battery incidents in Williston rose 171% to 38 charges last year. (2010) Two years ago, there may have been three-to-four violent crimes a week. Now, it's an average of two or three a night. [...] The small towns surrounding the Bakken formation haven't seen prostitution since the last oil boom in the 1980s, said Hanson. But just this month, a prostitution ring of four women was busted through a sting operation by the Williston Police Department, and several other rings are currently being investigated. Reports of rape, which were rarely reported before the boom, now, occur once a week in Williston, said Peterson (but he stressed that these are typically rapes conducted by someone who knows the victim).”<sup>314</sup>

These are just a few of the news sources we analyzed but the stories they tell and how they are told, are all very similar. Many people are becoming more scared of living in North Dakota

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312 FOX News, *Dark side of ND's oil boom: Meth, Heroin, Cartels All Part of Growing Drug Trade*, April 12, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/04/12/dark-side-nd-oil-boom-meth-heroin-cartels-all-part-growing-drug-trade-1418696252/>.

313 CNN Money, *Crime turns oil boomtown into Wild West*, October 26, 2011, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America\\_boomtown\\_crime/](http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America_boomtown_crime/).

314 *Ibid.*

because the news sources are demonstrating a huge increase in crime, which the people read every day.

Many people seem to think that murder rates have gone up dramatically, and when one looks at media news sources titles it is easy to tell why. Titles like “Murder, Mayhem and Mexican Mafia Stalk the Bakken Oil Fields”<sup>315</sup>, “Dark side of the boom”<sup>316</sup> and “In North Dakota, a Tale of Oil, Corruption and Death”<sup>317</sup> along with numerous titles about shootings. But when one looks at the numbers, this perceived increase in murder is clearly not the case. There were thirteen murders reported in 2005. This number only increased by one by 2013. This data shows that the murder rates have not increased significantly contrary to popular belief. But other crimes such as rape, robbery aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft have all increased.

In 2005, there were thirteen murders and in 2013 there were fourteen murders. Rape increased from 179 to 237 in 2013. Robbery increased from fifty-three to 151. Aggravated Assault increased by almost three times from 444 to 1,156. Burglary increased from 1,966 to 2,656. Larceny/Theft increased from 9,293 to 10,243. Motor Vehicle Theft increased from 1,030 to 1,228.

Two other main areas that have seen a large increase have been sex and drug trafficking. Both of these crimes have increased dramatically, and as such an FBI office has been set up in Williston to handle the numerous amounts of cases.

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315 The Huffington Post, *Murder, Mayhem and Mexican Mafia Stalk the Bakken Oil Fields*, 2015, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/georgianne-nienaber/murder-mahem-and-mexican-\\_b\\_4646552.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/georgianne-nienaber/murder-mahem-and-mexican-_b_4646552.html).

316 Washington Post, *Dark Side of the Boom*, September 28, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2014/09/28/dark-side-of-the-boom/>.

317 Deborah Sontag and Brent McDonald, New York Times, *In North Dakota, a Tale of Oil, Corruption and Death*, December 28, 2014, accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/29/us/in-north-dakota-where-oil-corruption-and-bodies-surface.html>.

“The North Dakota Century Code states that a person is guilty of human trafficking if that person ‘benefits financially or receives anything of value from knowing participation in human trafficking.’”<sup>318</sup> Most prostitution rings are being operated out of motels and massage parlors. “Paula Bosh, who has worked as a victim specialist with the FBI in Minot for eleven years, never encountered a human trafficking case until recently. She now estimates she has worked with twelve adult victims of sex trafficking in northwest North Dakota in the past one and a half years.”<sup>319</sup> One tactic cops are using to help catch these criminals is setting up sting operations. They put out advertisements that offer young girls who can be sold for sex. They then set up a location for the buyers to meet them, and when the buyers show up, they are arrested. Many people who are involved in sex trafficking are also involved in the drug trade.

Drug crime has gone up in North Dakota and there are now direct routes being linked to North Dakota from the major drug areas such as Mexico, California, and Texas.<sup>320</sup> Prior to the oil boom, drugs passed through many different hands before it ever reached North Dakota. Now there are fewer hands involved in the drug trade and the drugs are coming almost directly from the major drug areas to North Dakota instead of passing through other hands. North Dakota is becoming a site that drug cartels look at as being an optimal place for drug pushing and a place to make a lot of money. That is why many drug gangs are making their way and planting roots in North Dakota. Gang members from California are making a presence in North

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318 Bakken Today, *Human trafficking sting case ends in dismissal, lowered plea*, January 26, 2015, accessed April 9, 2015, [www.bakken.com/event/article/id/38217/publisher\\_ID/82/](http://www.bakken.com/event/article/id/38217/publisher_ID/82/).

319 Amy Dalrymple and Katherine Lymn, Bismarck Tribune, *Trafficking in North Dakota is on the rise, and often the victims can't escape*, January 04, 2015, accessed April 11, 2015, [http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/trafficking-in-north-dakota-is-on-the-rise-and-often/article\\_c7f42282-92b7-11e4-819f-5b05c8a62325.html](http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/trafficking-in-north-dakota-is-on-the-rise-and-often/article_c7f42282-92b7-11e4-819f-5b05c8a62325.html).

320 Jenny Michael, Bismarck Tribune, *Crime up 7.9 percent last year in North Dakota*, July 30, 2013, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/crime-up-percent-last-year-in-north-dakota/article\\_f0a23ec4-f940-11e2-ad25-0019bb2963f4.html](http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/crime-up-percent-last-year-in-north-dakota/article_f0a23ec4-f940-11e2-ad25-0019bb2963f4.html).

Dakota. One gang, Country Boy Crips, is considered to be a very violent gang that deals in women and drugs.<sup>321</sup> Another gang that has been in North Dakota is MS-13. They are considered to be one of the most violent gangs because they had experience in guerrilla warfare.<sup>322</sup>

This rapid influx of people has been challenging for law enforcement, as there has been a spike in calls for service, which has caused the police force to be stretched rather thin. Other crimes such as robbery, aggravated assault, rape, burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft have all increased in North Dakota taking attention away from the other major crimes such as sex trafficking and drug trade. The small-town police forces have been struggling to keep pace. In Watford City, police calls for service have multiplied almost 100 times in a five-year period.<sup>323</sup> In the face of the rising issues, the city's police service has grown from 4 to over 20 in a five year period.<sup>324</sup> In Williston, in a single month in the summer of 2011, the police department received 1,000 calls -- compared to the 4,000 calls it received in the three-year period between 2007 and 2009.<sup>325</sup>

From all of this data, a compelling argument can be made that crime has increased in North Dakota since the oil boom. Police forces in many cities are overwhelmed by the dramatic increase. Calls for service are increasing exponentially and the small police forces cannot keep

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321 Bakken Today, *Shooting case show gang presence in North Dakota*, December 25, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://www.bakzentoday.com/event/article/id/38131/publisher\\_ID/82/](http://www.bakzentoday.com/event/article/id/38131/publisher_ID/82/).

322 HIDTA, *Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS-13)*, accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>.

323 FOX News, *Dark side of ND's oil boom: Meth, Heroin, Cartels All Part of Growing Drug Trade*, April 12, 2014, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/04/12/dark-side-nd-oil-boom-meth-heroin-cartels-all-part-growing-drug-trade-1418696252/>.

324 N/A, *North Dakota's Oil Boom No Boom to Cops Struggling to Keep Up*, Daily News, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/north-dakota-oil-boom-no-boon-struggling-cops-article-1.2090549> (accessed 1 May 2015).

325 CNN Money, *Crime turns oil boomtown into Wild West*, October 26, 2011, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America\\_boomtown\\_crime/](http://money.cnn.com/2011/10/26/pf/America_boomtown_crime/).

up. The areas of most concern for police officers today are sex trafficking and the drug trade. These areas have seen a large increase and are extremely dangerous for the entire population of North Dakota, particularly the youth. From 2005 to 2013 there were increases in most types of crime besides murder. Contrary to popular belief the murder rates have not changed much, only increasing by one. Forcible rape, however, has increased by about sixty, robbery has increased by about one hundred, aggravated assault and burglary have both increased by about 700, larceny/theft by about 1,000, and motor vehicle theft by about 2,000. Crime in the Bakken region has clearly increased since the onset of the oil boom.

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<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 198.

<sup>iii</sup> Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder And Its Consequences* (New York: Vintage International, 2012), Kindle edition, 7.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

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<sup>viii</sup> Mark Walker, "N.D. oil boom draws sex trafficking to Sioux Falls," *Argus Leader*, 29 Jan. 2015, Web, 2 May 2015.

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<sup>x</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>xi</sup> Palash Ghosh, "Omaha, Nebraska: The Most Dangerous Place in America to be Black," *International Business Times*, 27 Jan. 2014, Web, 2 May 2015.

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<sup>xiv</sup> Susan Du, "Are Somalis Increasing Crime in Minneapolis?" *City Pages*, 25 Nov. 2014, Web, 2 May 2015.

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<sup>xvi</sup> David L. Bristow, *A Dirty, Wicked Town: Tales of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Omaha* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 2009), 227-9, 265.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Ibid.*, 233-64, 265.

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>xix</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xxi</sup> Ben Welter, *Minnesota Mayhem: A History of Calamitous Events, Horrific Accidents, Dastardly Crime, and Dreadful Behavior in the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), Kindle edition, 89.

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Patrick Straub, *It Happened in South Dakota: Remarkable Events That Shaped History* (Kearney, NE: Morris Book Publishing, 2010), Kindle edition, location 268.

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<sup>xxv</sup> *Ibid.*, location 298.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Ibid.*, location 304.

<sup>xxvii</sup> *Ibid.*, location 500.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xxix</sup> *Ibid.*, location 516.

<sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid.*, location 526.

<sup>xxxi</sup> T.D. Griffith, *Outlaw Tales of Nebraska: True Stories of the Cornhusker State's Most Infamous Crooks, Culprits, and Cutthroats* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2010). Kindle edition.

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